This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

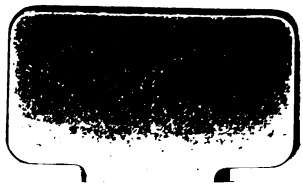
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

600021993U



S.CURTIS.
BINDER.

THE

CHRISTIAN COTTAGER'S TRIUMPH

IN

Sickness and Death;

OR,

THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE EXEMPLIFIED

IN THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF SOME AMONG THE HUMBLER

CLASSES, WHO HAVE DIED IN THE LORD.

Selected from "*THE COTTAGER'S MONTHLY VISITOR.*"

By the Rev. HENRY CLISSOLD, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "LAST HOURS OF EMINENT CHRISTIAN MEN AND WOMEN."

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. xv. 57.

LONDON:

Printed for the

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY,

GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

4, ROYAL EXCHANGE, AND 16, HANOVER STREET, HANOVER SQUARE;

AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

[930] 1854.

240 c. 428.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Address to the Reader	5
Poor Old Mary, the Stocking Weaver . .	11
Michael B——, the Pious Shepherd . .	24
E—— W——, and her Father T—— W—— .	28
Mary ——, the Widow	46
Polly Adams	58
Fanny C——, the Labourer's Wife . . .	64
Ann H——, the Boatman's Wife and Widow .	74
Jane D——, the Poor Needlewoman . .	78
C——, the Brickmaker, his Widow and Son .	84
Ann W——, the Sunday School Teacher . .	92
Sarah M——, the Domestic Servant . .	103
Mrs. B——, the poor but contented Widow .	109
Mrs. V—— and her Daughter Mary, the Cripple	115
Martha J——, the Backslider reclaimed . .	123
Mary and Thomas C——, the Ribbon-weavers .	140
Old John S——	149
A few Plain and Short Readings . . .	155
On Sick Persons sending for their Clergyman .	172
Prayer of a Sick Person	174
Concluding Hymn	175

ADDRESS TO THE READER.

THE Rev. H. Venn once told his children, that he would take them to see one of the most interesting sights in the world. He would not tell them what it was, but in the evening led them to a miserable hovel, whose ruinous walls and broken windows showed an extreme degree of poverty and want. "Now," said he, "my dear children, can any one that lives in such a habitation as this be happy? yet this is not all; a poor young man lies there on a miserable straw bed, dying of disease, at the age of nineteen, consumed with fever, and afflicted with nine painful ulcers." "How wretched," they all exclaimed. He then led them into the cottage, and addressing the poor dying young man, said, "Abraham Millwood, I have brought my children here to show them that it is possible to be happy in a state of disease, and poverty, and want; now, tell them if it is not so." The dying youth with a smile replied, "O, yes, sir; I would not

change my state with that of the richest person on earth, who has not the hopes that I have. Blessed be God! I have a good hope, through Christ, of being admitted into those blessed regions where Lazarus now dwells, having long forgotten all his sorrows and miseries. Sir, this is nothing to bear while the presence of God cheers my soul, and while I can have access to Him by constant prayer, through faith in Jesus. Indeed, sir, I am truly happy, and I trust to be happy through eternity; and I every hour thank God who has brought me from a state of darkness into marvellous light, and has given me to enjoy the unsearchable riches of his grace."

My own observation and experience would lead me to say, that the chamber of the dying Christian is one of the greatest means of spiritual improvement. So many are the instances in which I have seen meekness, patience, and hope exemplified; so many in which I have witnessed the answer to prayer, the supporting power of faith, the consoling influences of divine grace, that I consider the sick man's chamber one of the best schools of practical divinity. There we learn how to prize

the Bible as the word of God, wherein are given unto us those "exceeding great and precious promises," which, in the hour of affliction, animate the soul with new courage and strength. In the sick man's chamber we feel called upon to investigate what would be our hopes and fears, if we were in the place of the sufferer before us, and laid on a death-bed. Hence we are led to ask, Should not we be found wanting, if summoned to give a strict account of our thoughts, words, and actions, to Him, of whom it is said, "the stars are not pure in his sight[1]," "and his angels he charged with folly[2]?" In the sick man's chamber we are forcibly convinced how absolutely necessary to our salvation is Christ in the character of Redeemer, Advocate, and Mediator; and let me add too, that there the experience of thousands has testified that Christ has redeemed *them* to God by his blood, that He has been *their* Advocate with the Father, and that He ever liveth to make intercession for *them*. They had been persuaded to try the path of religion; and they experienced the benefit of receiving

[1] Job xxv. 5. [2] Job iv. 18.

counsel from the word of God, strength from divine grace, pardon through a Saviour, and peace from the Holy Spirit, when all else was clouded by poverty and pain, sickness and the prospect of death.

While there are some cottagers who glorify God by their deaths, are there not many who are living without God in the world? sabbath-breakers "finding their own pleasure and doing their own ways" in the crowded steam-packet and cheap excursion train; many careless ones who seldom or never cross the threshold of the church-door, but who give themselves up to intemperance and profligacy, bringing misery on themselves and their families. On reflection you must have become dissatisfied with the pursuits and vain pleasures in which you promised yourselves such gratification, and you begin to wish in the midst of your disappointment that you had found some surer source of comfort.

In this state I wish you to try an experiment which is simple, recommended by those who are gone before, and which will be approved by your own experience, if your endeavours are sincere and persevering, in proportion to the object in view. Try the

path of religion, and let your own happy experience test the truth of the declaration, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." You have tried the sins and pleasures of the world some ten, twenty, or perhaps thirty years, and you look back upon them only with pain and disgust. It is time, therefore, that you entered upon some other course, which may prove more satisfactory in the end. Do not prejudge it. You cannot deny that religion has joys in store for them who love the Lord, and are obedient to his will; joys which pass understanding; for you have not hitherto put yourself in the way of fairly deciding the question. You have no experience of the comforts and happiness of religion, because you have not yet tried it. A deaf man is no judge of sounds, nor is a blind man able to decide upon the merits of a picture; even so, the mind of man, in its natural state, is utterly incapable of discerning the beauty, happiness, and glory of religion, and the comfort of having a Saviour. You must begin by prayer, as David did, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me;" and to encourage you in the work of prayer, remember the

promise of Christ Himself, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." Forsake evil companions, and seek the friendship of those who will do you good. Cast out every immoral and irreligious publication which disgraces the cottage shelf, and put in its place the book of books, the Word of God. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, for it is "able to make you wise unto salvation." Renounce your intemperate habits and sabbath profanations. Diligently attend the ordinances of religion, public prayer, the preached word, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that so you may grow in grace and the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. And then, as the shadows of evening lengthen, you may say with Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;" with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" and with St. Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and rejoice in the assurance, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours."

THE

CHRISTIAN COTTAGER'S TRIUMPH,

&c.

POOR OLD MARY, THE STOCKING WEAVER.

DIED 1821. VERY AGED.

I WAS a few years since residing for a short time in a large and populous manufacturing town, in the middle of England, where there was a great deal of poverty and wretchedness. Some thousands of persons, both men and women, were employed in weaving stockings, at which the industrious could earn a most comfortable living; and, generally speaking, they did earn a great deal; but they spent it as fast as they got it; and in case of sickness, or any other cause which prevented their working, they were in the greatest distress; and their poverty was truly wretched, because they had unhappily none of those habits which teach us to submit to poverty with resignation. The young,

while in health, spent their earnings in dress, and in gadding about on Sundays and holidays to show their finery; the older people spent theirs in drinking and every other destructive vice; and the end of such courses was, as it always is, misery. There were of course many exceptions; some of which came under my own knowledge. One of these was a poor couple, who would have done honour to any station: the woman in particular was a pattern to her sex; and most sincerely do I wish that all who read this account may endeavour to be like her. The clergyman of the parish, one day in the depth of winter, mentioned to me the pleasure he had received in becoming acquainted with a poor invalid who appeared to be in a most distressed situation. He had heard of her only the day before, and as he was obliged to go from home for some days he begged me to go and see her, which I accordingly did; and in a garret, so old that the boards of the floor were in many places half an inch asunder, the casement very loose and broken, and the little furniture that was in it of the very worst description, I found a most interesting-looking woman, whom I call by her Christian name, Mary; she appeared about seventy years old, and was seated on a chair by the fire. Her husband, a clean, respectable-looking man, about the same age, was

working at his stocking-frame close beside her, and as the room was very small, the remaining space was nearly filled up by a low bedstead, without either posts or curtains; and, as I found upon inquiry, with no other covering than one very old blanket, and a small thin rug. I sat down by the poor woman, and learnt that she had been for two years and a half confined to her chair; from, and to which, her husband carried her every night and morning, as she had totally lost the use of her limbs from a rheumatic fever. Her dress was like her furniture, as mean and scanty as possible, but so neat and clean, that it immediately prepossessed me in favour of these people. It happened to be late in the day when I first called on them, and as the sky threatened a heavy fall of snow, I hastened home to send blankets and other comforts, that they might not pass another night with the little covering they then possessed. I beg the reader will bear in mind that what I am going to relate was the substance of many conversations; and, as nearly as I can recollect, I shall relate what Mary said in her own words.

In my second visit to poor old Mary, I learned from her that the fever which had so entirely taken from her the use of her limbs had been very severe, and had confined her to her bed for many weeks. "My Johnny,

madam," said she, "is a most excellent husband, and got me all the advice and assistance he could; but unfortunately, before I was out of danger, his eyes, which had always been very weak, became so diseased, that after suffering a great deal with them he totally lost the sight of one, and the other very nearly closed, and remained so weak and painful, that to this day, poor man, he can never work more than an hour at a time; and while we were both so ill, he could not earn any thing for many weeks, and all the little we had saved was soon spent." "You must have been in a sad situation indeed, my poor woman," said I, "without a friend to help you." "We should have been in a very sad situation, madam," answered she, "if we had not had a Friend who was mighty to comfort, and who did by his divine grace comfort our poor hearts, when we had no earthly help."

"Poor Johnny and I tried to bear our sorrows as it became us to do. For many weeks I could not move a finger, and was in such agony from the rheumatism, which seemed to be in the very marrow of my bones, that the sweat used to run down my face without my having the power to wipe it off, and my husband, almost blind as he was, could not do much to help me. Poor man," continued she, "he used to sit by me and cry like a

child; for though he had great patience and courage to bear his own pain, it went to his heart, he used to say, to think of mine, and to have no power to comfort me, but by his prayers; but he is a good man, madam, and a true Christian, and his prayers for his poor Mary were heard, for I *was* wonderfully supported.

"You must know, madam," said she, with a sweet, animated smile, "that my Johnny, though not older in age, is a much older Christian than I am; and as it was he who first taught me to know the blessings contained in the Word of God, I thought it my duty to show him, by bearing my pains as patiently as I could, and by keeping up my spirits and his, that he had not shown me the way to happiness in vain.

"What, perhaps, you will think strange is, that he cannot read at all; but he had, early in life, been brought to a sense of the misery of a dissolute life by a dreadful accident which befel him one evening after a drinking party, and which confined him to his bed in an hospital for many weeks. By degrees, and especially after he got well enough to go to church, his mind was awakened to a sense of the dangerous and dreadful consequences of the idle and sinful life he had till then led; and afterwards to all the blessedness of a life of holiness and

of humble trust in God. He was so earnest to obtain this blessedness, that, as he has often told me, he prayed earnestly to God to have mercy upon him, and to help him, by his Holy Spirit, to keep all his good resolutions; and the promises of our Saviour were made good to him, for he asked and he had; he sought and he found that grace which enabled him to forsake all his former wicked courses, and all his bad companions. About a year after this we married. I had learnt to read at a Sunday school; there also I had learnt my catechism, and had read great part of the Bible; and having always attended school very punctually, and behaved very steadily and obediently, I had a Bible and a Prayer Book given to me when I left school to go to service, and very proud I was of them, as my reward; but I never thought of them in any other light, and my only care was to behave well, that I might have a good character, and be thought well of by my mistress and my fellow-servants. But when I was married, my Johnny used to ask me to read a little out of my Bible to him of an evening, when we had done our day's work; and when on a Sunday we used to walk in the fields together, after church, he would talk to me of what we had heard there; of all the comfort we might hope to enjoy in this world, and the

certain happiness we should enjoy in the next, from the great mercy of God and the great merits of the Saviour, if we would humble ourselves before Him, and try to serve Him with all our hearts and all our strength. I loved my husband very dearly, and, at first, I listened to him, because I liked to hear him talk, and to think how clever he was, though he did not even know his letters; but very soon his plain and kind way of talking made me think a great deal of what he said; and, by degrees, I began to understand and to feel what wonderful things our Saviour had done for us; and soon, blessed be God for all his goodness to me, I delighted to look into my Bible, and to learn from it what the Lord my God required of me. I had always, till then, had such a very good opinion of myself, and had often been so much praised for my neatness and my industry, that I was surprised to find how much I needed the atonement of my Saviour, and how little I had, till that time, known or loved Him; for though, as I said before, I knew my catechism, had read my Bible, and done what was outwardly right, I had done it without a right feeling. I had, while at service, gone to church regularly when I could get leave, and had often said the prayers I had been taught to repeat at school; but I did not know, or, at least, I

did not remember, that God looks at the heart, and that it is not the words which we say, but the words which we feel, that He regards." At another time, speaking of her happy change of mind, she told me that she used to read the collects and other beautiful prayers in the Prayer Book to her husband, "who soon," said she, "as his whole heart was in it, learnt a great many; and when we kneeled down together every morning and every night, he used to repeat some of them so clearly and so devoutly, that I must have been a stock or a stone, my lady, not to have felt them.

"We had one little girl who was very dear to us both: my husband in particular loved her very fondly, because, as he said, she was so like me; and she was such a dear little lamb, so obedient to my husband and myself, that she was a great joy to us. But it pleased God, when she was about eight years old, to take her to Himself, after a sickness of only a few days; and a dreadful blow it was. But her dear father taught me, that as we had daily said, and taught our sweet child to say, in our blessed Lord's own beautiful prayer, 'Thy will be done,' we must now show that they were not vain words, but must submit to that will, and not rebel against it by our murmurs. 'Our merciful God, my dear Mary,'

would he often say to me as he kissed away my tears, while his own were streaming down his cheeks, poor man! 'our merciful God does not require us not to feel the loss of our little darling. Our Saviour Himself wept at the death of Lazarus, though He knew that by his almighty power He should raise him from the grave; we, therefore, may weep, but we must not sorrow like those without hope, certain as is our hope (for He is true who promised it) that we shall go to our little Mary, though she shall not return to us. In a few short years we shall be raised to that blessed heaven where death and sorrow will be known no more; where we shall meet not only our dear child, but our Saviour and our God, face to face, and dwell with them for ever in glory and happiness; and when we think of this, my dearest Mary, our tears may flow, but our hearts will rejoice; and we will say with patient Job, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

As my visits to poor Mary seemed to give her great comfort, and I took great pleasure in talking to her, I called very often; and though she was frequently in extreme pain, and sometimes even great agony, of body, I never saw her otherwise than cheerful and patient. To my usual inquiry of how she

did, she often answered, "Oh, I am very bad, my dear lady, as to my body; but, blessed be God! I am very happy in my mind; and the more I suffer, the weaker I get, you know, and the sooner I may hope to be released; but still I am not impatient, and shall, I trust, cheerfully wait God's own good time: the peace which in his great mercy He gives me here, is, I know, only a very small part of that joy which He has prepared for me in heaven. Sometimes, indeed, my heart is cast down when I think of leaving my dear Johnny alone in this world, as he will be; but as I tell him when we are talking of my death, though I shall go, God will never leave him, nor forsake him. O my dear lady, you cannot think what comfort this blessed promise has given to my poor heart! Often, before I knew our good clergyman and you, have my husband and I wanted a meal; and, for days and days together, we have had nothing but potatoes, when we were both in a weak state, and wanted more nourishment; but still we never despaired, and this promise, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' and all the other gracious promises of our blessed Saviour, cheered us, and made us feel happy and thankful.

"I have been thinking, that if you will put me in the best way of teaching my poor

Johnny to spell little words, I shall perhaps have time, before I am taken from him, to teach him to read a little; and when I am gone, if you, my dear lady, will let him come to you every day to spell over a few words, he will, I dare say, soon learn to read; for he has a fine memory, and is very quick. I have also another favour to ask you for him, which is, that you will let him sometimes walk in your garden, and gather a few flowers to bring home with him; and then, dear soul, if he can but read his Bible, and have some beautiful flowers to look at, he will not so much miss his poor Mary." My readers will, I hope, feel certain that I willingly granted these two requests, and they will, I think, be glad to hear that Johnny, though he was seventy-two years old when I gave him his first lesson, could, at the end of six weeks after the death of his wife, read a chapter in any part of the Bible with great ease.

Very soon after this conversation, Mary was obliged to take to her bed entirely, to which she was confined for rather more than a month before she died; she suffered a great deal from being obliged to lie so much in one position, for she was quite as incapable of moving herself when in bed, as she had been when she sat up; and, from being so excessively thin, her skin was, in many parts of

her body, soon rubbed off. Her sufferings, too, from the rheumatism, which never left her, were very great, but never so great as her patience; and never did I hear a murmur escape her lips; on the contrary, when she saw me look concerned, she would take my hand, and would say, "Do not grieve for me, my dear lady: the more I suffer in my body, the more happy I seem in my mind, for the more I feel the value of the hope that is in me; I know that no earthly thing can ease my pain, or give me power to move; but my heart is the more lifted up to that Almighty God who will now so soon raise my soul to live with Him in peace and joy for ever; and when I hear, as I always seem to do, those gracious words, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' then my sinking spirits rise, and I rejoice to think how soon this glorious rest will be my portion; and I am so happy that I would not change my poor, mean, dying bed, for all the grandeur of the world." Her sight became very dim, and I then used to read a chapter or a psalm to her; she would frequently stop me to make some excellent remark, and would sometimes go on to repeat the remaining verses of the chapter; and so clear was her recollection, and so great her knowledge of the contents of her Bible, that her remarks pleased as much

as they instructed me; and I now look back to the hours I thus passed with her as some of the happiest in my life. Two or three days before her death, she fell into a sort of doze, from which she seldom appeared to awake, except to utter a short prayer, or to make some acknowledgment of her happiness. On the last night she was very restless for some little time, after which she became more easy, and fell asleep; and when her husband awoke in the morning, his happy Mary was a corpse by his side.

We have seen that the trials of want, pain, age, helplessness, and partial blindness were allowed to press heavily on these old people; that they resorted to prayer in their distress, and that divine grace was given, not only to enable them to bear their afflictions without a murmur, but even to rejoice in tribulation. The same promises which were their support may be yours, if you pray with the same earnestness and humility; the same Redeemer will intercede for you as for them; and the same Comforter will cheer you in your last hour.

"All the promises of our blessed Saviour cheered us."

"Dear Name! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place;
My never-failing treasury, fill'd
With boundless stores of grace.

"Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

"Till then I would thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy Name
Refresh my soul in death!"

MICHAEL B——, THE PIOUS SHEPHERD.

DIED A.D. 1827. AGED ABOUT 30.

MICHAEL B—— was born of poor parents, and when they died, being only twelve or fourteen years old, he became dependent on the parish for support. Nothing could be more unpromising than his prospects were at this time. Michael, however, had practised the lessons he had been taught at school. He was steady at his work, respectful to those above him, and kind to all. This conduct recommended him to Farmer H——, who hired him to assist the waggoner, and gave him four pounds a year,

besides board and lodging. Here he lived till he was three-and-twenty, never forgetting that though he was the servant of man, he was also the servant of God. Scarcely a day passed in which he did not read a psalm or chapter in the Bible; and never, night or morn, did he neglect to fall on his knees, and thank God for the blessings of redemption and the conveniences of life. It happened that his master, who was not religiously inclined, heard him once praising God for placing him in this Christian land, and giving him so many comforts in it. "What!" said Farmer H——, "does this man, who works hard for his daily bread, and fares hard too, feel gratitude for mercies, while I, who am surrounded with plenty, have never yet acknowledged the gift, or felt indebted to the Giver?" From this event Farmer H—— was led to consider his ways, and then to repent; and it would take up too many pages of this work to speak of the regularity of his devotions, and the numerous good offices he does. I will, therefore, return to the short and simple story of my friend. The place of Looker (i. e. one who takes care of sheep in the marsh) being vacant, his master gave it him, with a house rent-free to live in. Michael had saved the greater part of his wages, and therefore found no difficulty in furnishing his cottage.

He afterwards married one whom he had known from childhood,

"Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat;"

they have brought up their family in the same Christian principles which guided their own conduct through life; and as you may easily suppose, the favour of Heaven has not been wanting to them.

I witnessed the last sickness of my friend, which was as calm and as peaceful as his life had been virtuous. In full possession of his reason, he called his children to his bedside, and after speaking shortly about their worldly condition, he affectionately added, "My dear boys and girls, I have only one dying request to make; and as you have obeyed me in other things, so now do in this. Love God, and observe the laws He has revealed in the Bible; they are the sure guides to contentment here, and happiness hereafter; at the same time praying constantly for the grace of the Holy Spirit to render your feeble efforts effectual, and looking unto Jesus alone, as the meritorious cause of your acceptance with God." He then shook each of them by the hand, bidding them farewell, and blessing them; and in the morning I was told that he had gently breathed his last. We hope he is gone to the regions of the blest. His last words

were, "Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such characters, I believe, are not uncommon in this kingdom; but I make this one known, that those who are erring from wisdom's ways may be encouraged and induced to return, seeing "all her paths are peace."

"Michael, however, had practised the lessons he had learnt at school." "His last words were, 'Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"Seek wisdom in life's early morn,
And thou shalt find in her
The various graces that adorn
The Christian character.

"The meek and lowly on that day,
The poor, and plain, and lone,
Shall shine like stars of purest ray
When Christ shall claim his own.

"Change comes not over that blest place,
Nor beauty waxeth dim;
The saints behold their Saviour's face,
And are complete in Him."

E—— W——, AND HER FATHER T—— W——.

THE TWO "BRANDS PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING."

T—— W—— DIED 1840, AGED 69; AND E—— W——, DIED 1840, AGED 24-5.

On being informed by one of our district visitors that a young person who was very ill desired to see me, I went to her, June 23, 1840, and found the subject of this memoir aware of her danger, and impressed with a due sense of the uncertainty of life. The hectic flush which occasionally spread over her otherwise pale face gave manifest indications of that flattering, but fatal disease, consumption. I had no sooner entered the room than she said that she thought it her duty to make a communication to me on her dying bed for the warning of young people, and that she wished me to make it known to them; that she might live long, or but for a short time only, and that therefore she made this request while she could; that she wished me to preach her funeral sermon, in order to reform others, and she suggested as the text a portion of Scripture which had produced an impression on her mind; and she thus continued: "From my death-bed I wish to declare the vanity of all earthly things, and to assure others that there is no peace

out of Christ." As a proof of her former thoughtlessness and ingratitude, she mentioned that some years before she accidentally fell into the river; that she was carried along by the swift stream then flooded by the rains, and nearly drowned; but that, though rescued by an almost miraculous interposition of Providence, she felt no gratitude whatever for her preservation; she offered no thanksgiving for past mercy, no prayer for future amendment; but merely said that she had had a narrow escape, and for years lived on as thoughtlessly as ever. Looking back upon that providential deliverance and her thoughtlessness, she expressed horror for the hardness of her heart, and said, "What would have become of me, sir, if in hurrying me down that river, God had hurried me into eternity?"

She then drew a comparison between worldly and religious friends. She said that her worldly friends had seldom come near her in her illness; her religious friends were kind and watchful, and ever by her side, (pointing to one such, then in her room,) where, by their reading, conversing, and kind attention, they were her comfort. "True it is," she also remarked, "after a long absence, one of my worldly companions, I will not say friends, did come; but I found her conversation so worldly and unsuitable to a

dying woman, that I was obliged to desire her not to come again."

She then told me that she was out sabbath-breaking when she caught the cold which ended in a decline. She said that mercy was mingled with judgment; for that this sickness had led her to reflect on her sinful ways, and to see that hell would be her portion unless she repented. Hence she wished to flee from the wrath to come.

I must now introduce to your more particular notice the father of this young woman, T—— W——, a man advanced in years, and very infirm. When first I visited the house he had an extraordinary aversion to conversation on religious subjects; for when I spoke of the Bible, sin, God's hatred and punishment of sin, salvation by Christ, the judgment day, heaven and hell, he would sit in sullen silence, become restless, or turn the conversation to any other subject. By kindness and perseverance in reading the Bible to him, and showing how great a friend the Bible was in offering such good advice to the aged when rapidly drawing near eternity, he was induced to listen and think; and soon afterwards I am happy to say that his wife related the following circumstance, which is important, inasmuch as it shows how great a benefit may be conferred by the "word in season." Having met with a severe acci-

dent, he was removed into a farm-house for change of air. The daughter, no longer able to converse with her father, wrote letters to him while there. One letter especially, written with all the anxiety of a child longing for the salvation of an aged parent, affected him deeply. He read it again and again, and as frequently wept over it, until it was so wet with his tears that he put it into the sunshine to dry. When I heard the mother relate this, I could not help saying to myself, "This is a blessed type of Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, who will one day shed abroad divine love in his heart, dry up the tears of conviction and penitence, and cause the heavenly beams of peace and joy to shine upon his soul." The former part of the letter is lost; the concluding part only is now before me, and, the first words I can decipher are these: "Regard your soul. I hope you are quite happy. O my dear father, continue to put your trust in the Lord, and He will be your friend! Still continue to pray to Him, and He will not let you want. He will comfort you in all your little troubles; He will support you in all your afflictions. Oh, the many blessings I have received at his hands! and the prospect I have of one day meeting my Sa-

viour in heaven makes me so happy, that I often wish I were with you, that I might tell you what I feel.—E—— W——."

On the return of the aged father from the farm-house to his home, we evidently saw that his illness would end in a rapid consumption. I soon visited him, namely, on July 21st. I then heard that an affecting interview had already taken place between the father and the daughter, when he said to her, "I am sorry to see you so poorly." She replied, "I am not poor, but rich; very rich in divine grace, and peace, and comfort." He said, "Then I wish I were rich, like you." She replied, "You may be, if you will but pray to God for it." He said, "You must remember I have been so very ill (he had been delirious) I could not pray." She answered, "Yes; but occasionally you are able, and it is the time to pray when you can." He said, "By God's help I will try." He afterwards declared, "I thank God! the iron bondage is taken from my heart, and I can pray;" and he added, "I feel that I am a new man altogether." The daughter was then removed from her father's room to her own in a very weak and fainting state; and when they were about to replace her on her bed, she said, "No; I will go down on my knees and pray to God for my dear father

before I die, for I may never be able to go down on my knees again." She then knelt down, and praised God who had begun a good work in her father, and prayed that He would continue it to the end.

I had already conversed with the father on the nature of the Lord's Supper, the duty of receiving it, and the blessings attached to it. I had read to him the account of its institution by our Saviour, with St. Paul's caution against receiving it unworthily. The father then expressed his wish to receive the holy sacrament at the same time with his daughter. But recollecting that this was the same person who, at first, sat in sullen silence when religion was introduced to his notice, and who endeavoured to avoid all conversation upon it, I thought it prudent to wait a little while, until I was more satisfied with his state. I had since received a most satisfactory account from a Christian friend who was staying in the house at the time, and who in this chamber of sickness had been "the Good Samaritan." He said, "He knew that Almighty God had visited his soul, and removed all fears of death. He felt that he had been a sinner, a great sinner, but that he had an indescribable comfort in knowing that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' He could now see religion in its true light, and he felt the

Saviour near to him." When it was said to him, "You can bear any thing now," his answer was, "My mind is so strengthened that I can suffer any thing. The Lord has so changed my poor heart that I am very happy, and I could die this moment without fear. Bless the Lord my Saviour, bless his holy name, I can now pray to Him!" This conversation, I am informed by his attendants, took place between him, his family, and friend, before I arrived to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

On Wednesday, the 22nd, I administered the sacrament to the father, mother, daughter, and friend. The daughter was borne into the father's room; he declared that no one could tell the peace of mind he felt, since he was convinced that he was a different man to what he had been, and that he could look to Christ as his Saviour. When I saw the father and daughter both lying in their weak state, both apparently so near eternity, uncertain which would be called away first, it appeared to me that these words in the Communion Service were more than usually solemn and affecting, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When the sacrament had been administered, I thought of aged Simeon; for I believe our aged brother could say with him, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" while the daughter had previously observed, "I am, like Mary, 'highly favoured of the Lord.'"

On Thursday evening the daughter said, "I feel, when I am in this low state, as though there was but one step between me and the grave. What if my father goes first? What joy it will be for him to welcome me! Or if I am summoned before him, what happiness for me to welcome my poor father into the presence of God our Saviour, who has redeemed us! They say that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; and there may be more joy over my poor father's return than mine, because he is an old man, and has neglected God for many years. This time last year, seeing him so bad, I used to think I would do all I could for my mother, if he should be taken away. Little did I think that my mandate was out, and that my race was nearly run."

The spirit of the earthly parent was first resigned to his heavenly Father, but not before he was rich in that grace, faith, and hope for which he had so fervently prayed. The daughter, as we shall here-

after see, was detained awhile upon earth, and proved in a remarkable manner, that "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ[1]," and that we may even glory in the midst of our tribulations.

To give some idea of her sufferings, we would quote her own observation. "Eight months I have lain upon my left side, without being able to turn on my hip and elbow, and my ears are so inflamed that I get but little rest." Her attendant and friend informed me, "She has a cough which violently shakes her frame, and her convulsions almost cause suffocation; and yet she never murmurs; she has no doubts, no misgivings. In her greatest sufferings she blesses and praises God; and she who was seldom or never heard to sing before, has songs given in the night season."

Great must have been her trial when informed of the death of her father. Did she then "sorrow as one without hope?" Did she repine at the mysterious ways of Providence, or murmur against his dispensations in this sad bereavement? We shall find a reply in this letter, which she wrote to her godmother:

[1] Rom. v. 1.

"My dear Godmother,—A few weeks since I did think that I was going to get better, but now all hope of that is gone. But, thanks be to God, I care very little which way it is, for I see nothing in this world to live for; and if prepared for a better, we need not fear death, come when he will. Oh, may we be all as well prepared as my poor father was, and may our end be as happy as his! He had his senses, and was praying to the last; and although I have lost a father, he has gained a crown of glory. Lost, do I say? But he is not lost, he is only gone a little before; and I hope we shall all meet him in that blessed place where there will be no more sorrow, but all will be happiness and peace. Then shall we meet all our departed friends. There we shall see our Saviour face to face, and our employment will be to praise his holy name for ever and ever. And we may all gain this happiness, if we pray for it. There is no one denied; rich or poor, we have only to ask and receive. And yet this is too much trouble for some of us. So you see what ungrateful beings we are to one that is so merciful.

"Believe me, my dear Godmother,

"Yours sincerely and affectionately,

"E—— W——."

There is also a written statement of what

she said while she was in great bodily pain, and in much sorrow at the death of her father, which shows that her faith was triumphant in the midst of the severest sufferings, and that divine grace carried her safely through them.

"Oh, give me grace quietly to submit to thy gracious will! Forsake not thy servant in this her last extremity! O merciful Lord, bring me to the rest prepared for those that believe in Thee! My Lord and Saviour, I will praise thy sacred name! I will, if possible, be patient for his sake who died for me. How can I shed a tear for my father, when the angels in heaven are rejoicing over his repentance?" A friend having said, "Christ will strengthen you," she replied, "How could I have gone through all this without his support?"

Her return to God, and her humble hope of acceptance by her heavenly Father, were the subjects of heartfelt praise. She was frequently heard by her attendants to sing those verses which you will find at the end of this narrative, to a plaintive tune (usually known as St. Stephen's or Nayland's).

On one occasion especially, after great agitation and suffering, she said towards night, "I will sing," which she did. And her ever-watchful attendant remarks, "Should I live years, the remembrance of her singing

would remain in my mind. She seems happier each day as her departure becomes more certain, because she feels her Saviour nearer and nearer. Her mind is withdrawn more and more from this world's vanities. She knows what it is to hold communion with God her Saviour." And again, "She has this day told me that her faith is fixed on our blessed Redeemer; that this has removed all fears of death from her mind; that the day she is summoned hence will be welcomed with the greatest joy. She is often giving me that encouragement which she herself feels, to trust in Him at all times and for every thing."

During her illness she was accustomed to write on her slate a statement of what she experienced; and the following meditation was one day found recorded: "Being left alone, I write my thoughts. This day I feel very low, but all within is PEACE! my Saviour, who is always near, gives that peace. Bless and praise his holy name for ever and ever! My soul, look back to this time twelvemonths, and see if you have not cause to love and to praise Him." On one occasion a friend said, "You do not, then, fear death?" Her answer was, "How can I fear to die, when I have such trust as I have?" She said to another person who

went to see her, "Since I saw you last, I have had three of the most happy days I ever had in my life. Oh, I have had such inward joy, such happiness, I cannot tell you! I did not like even to speak or be spoken to. I believe they often thought me asleep, but I was not. It was, indeed, sweeter than sleep—I was full of heavenly peace!"

A Christian friend, who was present, thus relates the effect produced on her own mind by witnessing the great patience of this disciple of Christ: "I pray for resignation, that should I be called in like manner, I may not be a Christian in word only, but in truth; for it is easy to deceive man, but we cannot deceive the Lord. My friend is a fine example to all. Her sufferings are most acute, but she is never out of humour with any one. I have sat and watched her while she was sleeping. The quick, short breath, to an anxious listener, has been almost insupportable. I have supposed that she would awake cross; but how different! The smile and good temper have quite surprised me. I am sure this has only been from the hope that is given her in our Saviour, and her confidence that He is watching over her through all her hours of sickness."

Her pains increased, but in patience she possessed her soul, which the following memorandum proves:

"Sunday night, Nov. 1, 1840.—Her sufferings are most severe, but she is most patient. One of her sisters expressed the hope that she would be patient even to the end. 'I am sure I shall,' was the answer. After extreme agitation from great pain she became composed. She said, 'I feel death gradually creeping on me, and my Saviour waits to take me. I hear the bell toll each night; oh, what a blessed day will it be when it tolls for me! I cannot be grateful enough for all the blessings I have received.' A friend saying, 'What shall I do when you are gone?' she replied, 'God will be your friend; go to Him, and you will want no other.'"

To one who stayed with her during the night she said, "My dear friend, you remember what our blessed Lord said to his disciples when He was going to leave them; He said, 'I will not leave you comfortless; I will send you the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, from the Father.' I may say that He has done so indeed for me; for since I have been ill He has brought all things to my remembrance, especially what I learned in my youth, but, alas! did not value. I have felt his power in all the ways spoken of in

Scripture. Yes! a Remembrancer, a Comforter, a Convincer, that will guide us into all truth. It is quite my support day and night." On another occasion she observed, "The progress I have made in the knowledge of the Saviour and of salvation by Him is so great, and so out of proportion to my exertions, that I am convinced it has been produced by the Holy Spirit, without whom I could have done nothing."

On Nov. 2nd she said, "Where shall I be by one this day?" and then exclaimed, "Oh, I never thought what a hard thing it was for soul and body to part!" Again she exclaimed, "This is agony, but not of blood! But I will not cry out; I will endure with patience!" Again she was heard to sing two or three lines of a hymn; and then said, "Glory, honour be unto Thee, my Saviour! O praise the Lord! The fountain of grace is open every day. Here I seek for fresh supply. It is the Lord that keeps me quiet as I am. Oh mother! I have had a long turn of it; but whether at one to-day or one to-morrow, it matters not. You, my friend, live in the country, and have not the temptations of London; but wherever you are, live unto the Lord."

In extreme suffering she would refer to the 103rd Psalm, and quote the passages which applied to herself. At other times

she would say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! yet, if it be thy will I should still suffer, oh, give me grace and strength to bear it quietly!" She seldom slept in the night, but constantly repeated passages from the Bible, and sang hymns. Her voice was very feeble, and she had great difficulty in breathing. The important hour was now at hand, and I am about to present to you the last written statement respecting this Cottage Christian. This account is dated Nov. 17, 1840. It is given by her female friend, who was present, and who thus writes:

"I was with her during her last hours, and feel assured she was wonderfully supported. She suffered much. She took my hands, and said, 'Trust in Him, as I do. I wish you to do this: cast all your care upon Him, and BELIEVE, only BELIEVE!" She seemed not to lose sight of her heavenly Father, but prayed to Him as if she was in his immediate presence. I was astonished, considering her extreme weakness, at the exertion she made to implore each person to turn unto the Lord. Every one wept whom she addressed. While thus engaged she seemed not to be in pain, but raised above her sufferings by trust in the Lord; and said, 'I cannot be grateful enough for all the benefits shown unto me.' I said, 'You have no fear in death.' She replied, 'None, none,

bless the Lord!' She often, when in pain, commenced singing; the last night of her life she was heard to sing two verses of Bishop Ken's Evening Hymn. She afterwards became somewhat delirious; but at intervals of reason, with clasped hands and eyes directed upwards, appeared to be holding communion with Heaven. I never saw so beautiful a sight, or so awful a countenance. She said to her mother, 'I want you, mother, to kneel down and say a short prayer for me.'

"Having personally witnessed her endeavours to recal her father and some relations from their thoughtless ways, I may remark that in doing so there was nothing dogmatical in her voice or manner; on the contrary, she seemed humbled to the dust by a sense of her own unworthiness. She could indeed say, 'My sin is ever before me;' and yet, standing on the confines of the eternal world, she was impressed with her awful position, and was most earnest in persuading those she loved to leave their evil courses. This explains the otherwise unaccountable fervency of her language whilst speaking to them: she considered the final state of the impenitent and unbelieving, and she could not, as a Christian friend, do otherwise than warn those who were near and dear to her, lest they should come into condemnation.

"On the morning of the day on which she died she seemed much more quiet. She then had three successive convulsive fits, but was calm between, and blessed the Lord. At last in a gentle tone she said, 'Mother, why do you not light a candle, for it seems dark?' This not being so, it was seen that her end was fast approaching, and in a few minutes she expired with much quietness.

"Thus she died, blessing and praising God her Saviour; nor for a moment, during her long and trying illness, did she once murmur: so great is the peace of them that trust in the Lord. I never heard her complain of her afflictions, nor give a single unkind word to any that stood around. Her love to her mother and careful discharge of her duty to all, was one great proof that she was taught of God.—Nov. 17, 1840."

"She was frequently heard to sing those verses which you will find at the end of this narrative."

"I die with hunger here (he cries),
I starve in foreign lands;
My father's home has large supplies,
And bounteous are his hands.

"I'll go, and with a mournful tongue
Fall down before his face:
Father, I've done thy justice wrong,
Nor can deserve thy grace,

"He said, and hasten'd to his home
To seek his father's love;
The father saw the rebel come,
And his affections move.

"He ran and fell upon his neck,
Embraced and kiss'd his son.
The rebel's heart with sorrow brake,
For follies he had done.

"A day of feasting I ordain;
Let mirth and joy abound;
My son was dead, and lives again,
Was lost, and now is found."

MARY ——, THE WIDOW.

DIED 1842.

A CLERGYMAN thus writes:—It is now some years ago that, as I was walking at a late hour through a rather remote part of my parish, I passed a neat, pretty cottage, in which lived a young woman. She had married about five years before, and when naturally looking forward to the enjoyment of much happiness, it had pleased God to visit her with a severe affliction, and to take from her the husband who was her chief earthly comfort; and from that time a great change had taken place in her. She had been before full of life and merriment, but afterwards she was scarcely ever seen to

smile, and rarely spoke excepting when obliged; and her only remaining delight seemed to be her little orphan girl, who was nearly four years old. I had been told, however, a short time previous to the visit I am about to relate, that she had lately appeared more comfortable. She had often been seen with her Bible before her, and had now and then been known to speak to her neighbours of the necessity of religion,—a subject which, before her husband's death, she had never seemed to consider very deeply; and in consequence I became anxious to talk to her, and determined to take advantage of the present opportunity. I was on the point of knocking at the door, when a sound within made me pause, and I plainly heard a child's voice repeating part of the Lord's Prayer. This made me feel still more interested in the young woman; but not wishing to disturb her at that moment, I walked up and down in front of the cottage till I thought I had given her sufficient time to put her little girl asleep, and then gently asked if I might be allowed to enter. The request was granted directly, and there was almost a smile on her face as she saw me; but she was looking pale and ill, and I could clearly see the effects of grief in every feature.

How many apparently trivial incidents are, by God's good providence, overruled for the

good of souls! The clergyman who overheard this orphan child repeat the Lord's Prayer received it, no doubt, as an intimation that a consideration of it might be usefully applied to the disconsolate state of the poor widow. The assigned limits of this little book will allow me to present to the reader only a few extracts from the good remarks which he made, not only on this, but on several occasions when he called afterwards; but his remarks on the Lord's Prayer had so good an effect on the mind of this poor widow, that, I doubt not, they will be useful to others.

"This prayer," he said, "was given us by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer, who came into the world and suffered a great deal of pain and misery, and at last died upon the cross to save us from the punishment due to our sins. Now, if Jesus Christ had not done this, we should never have learnt to call God our Father; for we could never have thought of Him but as an all-powerful and all-holy Being, whom we were continually offending, and, therefore, whose anger we ought to fear. We could not for a moment have looked upon Him as a Father, to be loved as we love our earthly fathers. We may now look upon Him as a merciful Father, and He allows us to be called his children, so that this brings us

near Him, though He is in heaven. If we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with sons. Ought you not to punish your child for her improvement when she does wrong, and do you think that God can be less wise than man? When we are careless, and indifferent to religion, He sends us sickness to make us think; when we are too anxious about the things of this world, He sends us poverty to make us look forward to another; and when we love our earthly friends too well He takes them from us, that we may learn to lean upon Him alone. We may not be able to think of all this at the moment we are suffering, but it is not the less true. I have hardly spoken at all of the greatest of all proofs which we have of the love of God, even that which He gave us when He sent his Son to die for us, and which is sufficient of itself to convince us that He loves us as his children, because I wished rather to remind you of the every-day marks of his affection, which we are, perhaps, more likely to forget; for when we read of this one great event in the Bible, we are very willing to own that it is a sign of his infinite mercy; but if some slight trial should come upon us afterwards, we are immediately unmindful of it, and are ready to say that God does not love us; whilst, in fact, these trials are quite as much intended

for our benefit and to make us happy as the greatest prosperity can possibly be; indeed, far more so."

The faithful pastor, having repeated his visit and renewed his conversation, went home. But one morning, as he paced up and down the broad gravel-walk in front of his parsonage, he was told that a little boy had just come from Mary's cottage to say that her child was very ill, and that the widow was so disconsolate at the prospect of losing the child that she would hear no words of comfort. The clergyman was not surprised at the summons, for he had often remarked, that when we fix our hearts too fondly upon any earthly object, God, in his mercy, most frequently removes it from us; and Mary's doating affection for her little child was such as almost to amount to idolatry. Was it, then, to be wondered at, that He who by slow degrees was leading back her soul to Himself, should see fit to afflict her in the way most likely to make her feel that her love was to be fixed, not on earthly, but on heavenly objects?

The sick child was lying on the bed, perfectly insensible, though her little eyes were open, and a low moaning escaped her lips. By her side was an elderly woman, painfully watching every change in her features; but Mary was in the darkest corner of the room,

her head resting on her hands, almost as unconscious as the child. "Mary," I said (relates the clergyman), "do you remember the words you repeat in your daily prayer, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?' It is God's will that your child should suffer, and it is his will also that you should be patient." She half raised her head. "I could wish," I said, "to speak words of consolation to you now, and tell you of the infinite love of God, and his purposes of mercy in afflicting us, but I fear my words would be quite thrown away upon you; you will not think of Him as a Father. Why will you not pray to Him, Mary, and ask Him to give you resignation, and enable you to be contented that his will may be done? You would wish your child to grow up in health of body and mind; you would like her to be devoted to God, dutiful to yourself, and charitable to others; and you would also, I fear, like her to have beauty and riches, though you know that they are both most dangerous snares; and yet, when she is on the point of obtaining all that you most earnestly long for, you would willingly bring her back to scenes of suffering, to live for many years in a world where she will certainly learn to sin, and may perhaps go so far out of the right way as to lose for ever her hope of eternal happiness." The poor

mother did not speak, but her lips quivered, and she leant back against the wall to support herself. "Mary," I continued, "it is now four years since you carried your child to the font, and there solemnly gave her to God; and He, on his part, did then most assuredly receive her as his own. Now God, in his mercy, calls her to her home. He would take her where death cannot enter, where sorrow has no place. He would give her for her companions the beings who are ever waiting round his throne, and He would make her beautiful and spotless like them, and yet you murmur! In a few hours, according to all human probability, your child will be an angel—tell me, would you then bring her back to earth?" I waited for an answer, yet none came; but Mary's eyes glistened, and one large solitary tear rolled down her pallid cheek; the stony heart had been touched: sinking into her chair, she wept bitterly; I could see that her feelings were very different from those which had before caused her stern, unnatural composure. For a short time I allowed her to give full vent to her grief; and then, after it had a little subsided, we knelt down together by the bedside of the dying child, and offered up the beautiful prayer of the Church to Him "to whom belong the issues of life and death;" and

when we concluded with our Lord's own petition, and repeated the words, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," Mary's voice, though it trembled, became more earnest, and the sigh which escaped when the prayer was ended seemed the last expiring struggle of that rebellious spirit which I trusted had now, at least for the time, been overcome. We parted immediately afterwards, Mary's only words being, "God bless you, sir!" In a few hours our anticipations (fears they can hardly be called) were realized; and when I next visited Mary's cottage, she was a widow and childless.

Days and weeks passed on as usual after these events. The sun rose and set; the flowers blossomed and died; the labourer went forth in the morning to his daily work, and returned to his home happy and contented; the children played together on the village green, and their voices sounded merrily on the evening breeze; and, to all outward appearance, that which had occurred was as if it had never been. But there was one by whom that dying scene could never be forgotten: the mother, who with so deep a joy had welcomed her infant at its birth as her most precious treasure, who had so fondly guarded it in health, and so earnestly prayed for it in sickness, now sat by the empty cot in her solitary cottage, with a

heart often sinking under that bitter grief which only a parent can feel. It was not that Mary was ever tempted to repine or give way to despair, for every day's experience made her see that her child had, indeed, been taken away from the evil to come. Another grief awaited her. She had lost her husband and her only child; her brother now enlisted and was about to leave her for a foreign land. She listened with gratitude to my words of comfort, and joined with solemn earnestness in the prayer which I offered for her unhappy brother; but I saw from that moment that the hand of death was upon her, for her cup of trial was full. Her extreme weakness and distressing cough soon prevented her from attending at church, and I was anxious to do all in my power to cheer and comfort her during the short remaining period of her life. The change in Mary's spirit was now most evident. She would thankfully acknowledge how great a blessing it was to feel that her child was safe in heaven, and that she was taken in early life from those temptations which have led to the ruin of many. Each day her faith and trust became firmer, that the merits of her Saviour would obtain for her the happiness of heaven.

I well remember the last conversation which I had with Mary before she was laid

on that bed from which she never rose again. On the previous day I had administered to her the Holy Communion, which she had latterly never failed to receive on every opportunity; and some time after, (when speaking of the explanations and applications made to her of the Lord's Prayer, which her little girl was heard repeating,) I said, "When you spoke those words, you thought that death, and sickness, and poverty were evils." "Ah, sir!" said Mary earnestly, "I do not think them so now; they have been by far the greatest blessings of my life; without them I should have loved this world, and forgotten the next." "And without them," I continued, "you would never have known the power of your Saviour to support you in the midst of trials, and the infinite blessing of his love to comfort you in solitude and suffering. Nothing which brings us nearer to Him can be an evil. We are fellow-Christians, baptized into the same Church, with the same hopes and the same fears; and when God shall have taken you to your rest, it will cheer and comfort me in my earthly course to remember how his arm supported you through yours. I can never forget one whom it is my earnest prayer one day to meet in heaven." Mary did not reply, but

closed her eyes, and sank back in her chair, and seemed engaged in silent prayer.

When about to quit the room, I said, "There is one who can never leave you." "Oh no!" she exclaimed, "I am never lonely, even in the long, weary nights. The words of the Bible come back to me, and the beautiful prayers of the Church; and if I sleep, I cannot tell you how happy my dreams are, for it seems as if I was already in heaven, and the angels were near me, and my Saviour watching over me, and telling me it was He who purchased it all for me; and at times I can see my parents, and my husband, and my child, like what they were on earth, only bright and glorious as the angels, and I sigh, when I wake, to think it is not all real." Then said I, on leaving her, "And now I must go; but I leave you with the full confidence that, whether in life or in death, you will be happy; for the peace of God will be with you, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Once more, and once more only, I visited Mary in her cottage; but she was not then seated by the open casement, enjoying the evening air, but stretched upon her bed, awaiting with calmness and resignation the last moment of her earthly trial. The pale-

ness of the face, the failing sight, the feeble voice, the quick-drawn breath—all told that it was near; but Mary's few words still spoke all the holy peace of a Christian's hope concerning the danger that was before her. I will not attempt to describe all that passed in that chamber of death; it would be but to repeat what has been said and done by all who, like Mary, have endeavoured to conquer sin by the aid of divine grace; and, putting their trust in a Saviour's merits alone, can look to Him with unshrinking trust in the hour of need. Blessed are they who have beheld that peace—the peace which passeth understanding. Thrice blessed they who have themselves borne witness to its power. And Mary's deathbed was indeed an example to all who surrounded it. Deep humility, fervent love, unwavering faith, all were there. It seemed, indeed, as if for a few short moments the brightness of heaven was shining upon this dark and sinful world; but the words of holy confidence and joy became fewer and fainter, the fond pressure of the hand was more feeble, the lingering breath could scarcely be heard. There was one last look of gratitude, one long-drawn sigh, and the weary spirit was at rest for ever.

"Thy will be done."

"Almighty Father, robed with light,
Seated upon thy heavenly throne,
Oh! teach our hearts to feel aright,
And tongues to say, 'Thy will be done.'

"In all thy just and righteous ways,
Thy grace and goodness may we own;
For every mercy yield our praise,
And say, O Lord, 'Thy will be done.'

"And when oppress'd with grief we lie,
When brighter scenes are fled and gone,
Still may our souls submissive cry,
Father in heaven! 'Thy will be done.'"

POLLY ADAMS.

Died December 1843. Aged 48.

There is a small and rocky island in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, removed by many hundreds of miles from Asia and America, and lashed night and day by foaming billows. There live the descendants of those mutineers, who, thrusting into a launch their commander, Lieut. Bligh, and eighteen others, sent them adrift on the wide sea; and then seizing the ship, named the Bounty, contrived at last to reach Pitcairn's Island. As long as the mutineers were without God,

"the works of the flesh" were "manifest," "adultery, fornication, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Only two of the fifteen who landed on the island from the Bounty died a natural death. But in the providence of God, one of these survivors, called Smith, otherwise John Adams, was appointed to produce a great and blessed change in the little community. He found a Bible and a Book of Common Prayer, which had been saved from the Bounty. Adams was at that time the only man left on the island, his companion having died; but there were twenty children, the descendants of the deceased mutineers. Adams began to read the Bible; and who can tell the power given by the grace of God to the study of the revealed Word with prayer, and to a thoughtful and candid perusal of the injunctions of the Saviour, to whom the young were objects of the tenderest regard? He instructed the young people about him, not only in reading and writing, but in the fear of God. He prayed for them and for himself. He always had morning and evening prayers, and taught the children the collects and other portions of the liturgy, beginning with the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. "The fruit of the Spirit" in due time was "manifested in love, joy,

peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." Adams was thus an island patriarch, and the rising family about him a generation whom the Lord had blessed.

John Adams died in 1829. The providence of God had sent Mr. George Nobbs to be his worthy successor, who arrived in the island in 1828. He sacrificed whatever earthly comforts he had enjoyed, in order to be the schoolmaster, doctor, and pastor among them. In the year 1852 this remarkable man came to England, and was introduced to the Queen and Prince Albert, by whom he was most graciously received.

Inquiry having been made of Mr. Nobbs by some parties in America a few years since, as to any instances of sudden and extraordinary conversion which might have fallen under his notice, he replied that his experience did not furnish any such cases from Pitcairn[1]. In answer to the question put to him, he remarked, in reference to the case of Polly Adams, which will be noticed in a following page, as well as to some other instances, "Had inquiry been made for ex-

[1] He does not affirm that there have not been, or may not be, any such; for the Bible furnishes an account of a few, and Mr. Adams's change recorded in the annals of Pitcairn was occasioned by the unexpected discovery of a Bible and Prayer Book.

amples of Happy Deaths, I could have replied with unmitigated satisfaction; for I have seen many depart this life, not only happy, but TRIUMPHANT. And herein is, I think, the test of the Christian character; for when we see a person, who for a number of years has not only in word, but in deed, adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, brought by sickness or casualty to the confines of the eternal world, about to enter the precincts of the silent grave, yet with unabated energy and fervour proclaim his hope of a glorious resurrection; when we see a person suffering most acute pain, encouraging and exhorting others to pursue the same path he has trod; telling of the love of God to his soul, and of his desire to depart, that he may enter into the presence of his Redeemer; when we witness such unwavering confidence amid such intense sufferings, and when the sanity of the patient is undoubted, can we hesitate to say at the demise of such an one, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?' It has been my felicity to witness several departures of this description within a few years: two from accidents, one from a cancer in the breast, one shortly after childbirth, and one from disease in the heart. Some of the diseases were lingering, others rapidly fatal; but in all cases

the sufferers were strong in faith, giving glory to God.

"I will now give an account of the last hours of Polly Adams. The narrative, though brief, contains the substance of a dying Christian's faith and consolation.

"'How are you to-day, Polly?' said I to the wife of George Adams, who had long been grievously afflicted with a cancer in the breast, and was rapidly approaching the grave. 'I shall soon be at home, sir,' she said. 'On whom is your hope placed at this time?' I asked. 'On the blessed Saviour who died for me, and has redeemed me.' And then she went on to declare her faith and hope, of which the verses at the end of this narrative are the substance.

"Polly, wife of George Adams, departed this life Dec. 17, 1843, aged 48 years. I have merely versified part of the foregoing conversation: it is in sum and substance a reply to an inquiry made by me concerning her state of mind in the prospect of death, which was then rapidly approaching. Assuredly her end was peace."—George Nobbs, Pastor and Schoolmaster, in the island of Pitcairn, in the Pacific[2].

[2] This account is taken from that very interesting little book, "Pitcairn," by the Rev. T. B. Murray, recently published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

"I BELIEVE, I BELIEVE."

"You ask how I feel in the prospect of death,
And whether the grave has no terrors for me?
If bright are my hopes, and unshaken my faith,
And to whom for relief in my sufferings I flee?
The questions are weighty, and I am so weak,
Yet will I endeavour an answer to give;
And this is the substance of what I would speak,—
I believe, I believe.

"On the brink of the grave it has pleased my Lord
To keep me long waiting the word to depart!
And though for dismission I oft have implored,
Yet He has forgiven the thought of my heart;
Though often impatient and prone to complain,
Much love in this chastening I plainly perceive:
Our Father afflicts not his children in vain;
I believe, I believe.

"This body so wasted by ling'ring disease,
That scarce to the worms it can furnish a meal,
Insatiate death as a trophy may seize,
And in me the sad fruits of transgression reveal;
But must I for ever continue his prey?
No,—Jesus my dust from his grasp shall relieve;
The call to arise I shall gladly obey;
I believe, I believe.

"I know on this earth my Redeemer shall stand,
And these eyes, though now dim, shall his glories behold;
My powers so reduced shall with knowledge expand,
And this heart throb with rapture, which now beats so cold.
His voice I shall hear, and in accents divine
Shall I, then made worthy, a welcome receive;
In his presence to dwell, 'twill for ever be mine;
I believe, I believe.

"This then is my hope; and I am not deceived,
On the word of my God I can fully depend;
I know by the Spirit on whom I've believed,
That He will support and console to the end.
Immanuel's death hath Jehovah appeased;
That death on the cross did my ransom achieve;
That death is my passport when I am released;
I believe, I believe; yes, I firmly believe."

FANNY C——, THE LABOURER'S WIFE.

DIED 1844. AGED 25.

AMONG the various dealings of an all-wise Providence, it is deeply interesting to contemplate the different ways, in which it pleases our heavenly Father to draw the hearts of his children to himself. The subject of this memoir appears to have been gently led by affliction to seek for that peace which can be found only in the comforting truths of the Gospel. In recording the circumstances which attended the last remaining weeks of Fanny C——, we have nothing of striking interest to engage the attention of those into whose hands this simple narrative may fall; but we merely state that in which all are interested—the power of religion as exemplified in the happy experience of an unassuming, modest, and sincere Christian in the solemn prospect of eternity; and although to the inexperienced and thought-

less this may have no attraction, the humble servant of God, who is earnestly seeking after "the best things," will be drawn by sympathy with, and it is hoped may profit by, the humble example of one who was early called to encounter the trials of life; one who had deeply felt the burthen of sin, but who had also on sincere repentance found it sweet to hold communion with her God, by seeking the Saviour, whom to know is life eternal. It is in the hope of thus imparting Christian instruction by example, that the cottager's friend has ventured to make known the few conversations which came under her own observation, during the short period of her acquaintance with the subject of this little recital.

Fanny C—— was the daughter of a respectable cottager living in the village of H——. After a few years spent in service, she married a labourer, who came, after his marriage, to live in this place. I had frequently observed her in passing her door, where she stood nursing her little one; and the delicacy of her frame, the extreme modesty of her deportment, with an appearance of dejection in her countenance, interested me greatly; and I became more intimately known to her from accidentally meeting her in the street one day as she was

on her way to her cottage with some medicine in her hand. I observed her leaning against a wall for support, almost fainting. On speaking to her when she had recovered herself, I said, "I fear you are very ill?" She replied, "I am indeed, ma'am, very weak; but I have been for some medicine which I hope may be useful to me." On her reaching home I left her, after receiving from her many grateful expressions for the trifling assistance I had rendered her.

In a few days I saw her again, and found her evidently much weaker than when I met her in the street; a most distressing cough shook her enfeebled frame, her hands were burning with fever. In addition to all this, she was expecting her second confinement in a few weeks. I said, "I fear you are heavily afflicted." She said again, "I am weak, ma'am, but I hope never to be unmindful of the great mercy of God in thus laying his chastening hand upon me. I feel a humble hope that He is gradually preparing me for Himself. I have, indeed, done with this world; its cares and its anxieties are now nothing to me. I have one dear little boy, but he is taken care of by kind friends, and God will provide for him; to his care and love I commend him. I have not a wish to live long; I should be

glad, if it might be the will of God, to be spared a few weeks, that I might still further show my sincere repentance, and be in some greater degree made fit for my departure; but I desire to leave that and every other concern in the hand of my God. To the blessed Saviour alone do I look for salvation. I know that I have no other ground of hope; but there I may rest, for He has said, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' 'Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' Blessed words! precious truths to the weary and heavy laden." She added, "I hope I am not deceiving myself, but I do indeed feel comfort in speaking of these things. Once," said she mournfully, "I had no pleasure in them; I had no love for serious subjects; it was a burthen to me to hear of God and of his great goodness; I listened not to those who would have led me in the paths of righteousness; but oh! that the young would listen to me; oh! that I could persuade them to turn from the vanities of the world; oh! that I could tell them of that sweet peace which I now enjoy in giving up the world, and fleeing to God through the blessed Saviour." She was asked if she would like to be read to. With an expression of delight, she said how thankful she would be. She listened with great earnestness to

the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, especially the last four verses. The last two chapters of the Revelation were also read to her, on hearing which she was deeply affected, and with much fervour she exclaimed, "Who can wish to stay here, when scenes like these await them? Oh that I may be fitted for that blessed place! may I find mercy through the Saviour! 'other refuge have I none.'" Shortly after this interview she gave birth to a little girl. She was, for the first two days after her confinement, so much more comfortable than previously, that some of her friends thought she would recover, and expressed this hope to her. "No," she said, "do not deceive yourselves; I desire to return praise and thanksgiving to my God, and to own his great mercy in supporting me through my late struggle; but I am still hastening on to my last home. I wish not to think otherwise, I have done with the world. Christ alone shall occupy my remaining days; in his blessed name alone I trust, and all my desire is to hold communion with God by prayer, and faith in the Redeemer."

In another conversation, I asked if she had comfortable nights. She replied, "I sleep very little in general, but I do not in the least mind that; indeed I rejoice to be awake in the night, for I find it a season of sweet

refreshment to my soul, when all around me is still, and no voice is heard; then, more than at any other time, do I enjoy communion with my God in prayer; and I have experienced more especial strength from above during the still hours of the night than at any other time; and in those hours I feel, indeed, a 'peace which passeth all understanding.' Blessed be God, though his supporting arm is ever near me, yet chiefly do I experience his loving-kindness and mercy in the night season."

During her illness, it pleased God to remove very suddenly a poor man, who was a stranger here, and was on his way to some distant place, when he died almost in a moment. This event deeply affected her, and it gave her, she said, fresh cause for gratitude to God that she was gradually prepared by lengthened affliction for her own approaching hour. "This poor man," she said, "is snatched into eternity in a moment, whilst I am left, still to cry out, 'Lord, save me!' May I improve the solemn warning!" In speaking one day of the past events of her life, she told me that she went at a very early age to service, and that on first going out she was so fortunate as to live with a very pious family. "Had I but remained there, ma'am," she said, "I should have done well; I should have escaped many dangers

into which I afterwards fell; I should have been preserved from many sorrows, and should have been spared many a painful reflection. The family in which my first service was passed were my true friends, though I knew not then their value; but I know it now. Like too many other thoughtless young people, I was pleased with a change of place; and tempted by the hope of bettering myself in outward things, I left my place of safety and peace for one full of temptation and danger."

And here, perhaps, a few words of admonition to young women going out to service may not be without their use. Should any such read this little narrative, let them well consider poor Fanny C——'s warning voice; let her example teach them the immense importance of placing themselves, especially in early life, in the families of those who fear and love God. Young persons too often prefer places in families where God is neither feared nor loved; and it is grievous to know how many have made shipwreck of their peace of mind, even in the flower of their youth, by taking up their abode with irreligious persons, in order to avoid the restraint which religion imposes, not reflecting that it is their highest privilege to be kept from temptation, and to be sheltered by the advice of the wise and good. They

cannot be too cautious in inquiring every particular of the places when they are about to offer themselves for servants; and happy would it be if each young servant would seek the counsel of her "spiritual pastor" on this as on all other steps in her journey of life. It is among the innumerable blessings which the members of the Church enjoy, that in most cases—many could we record—their pastor is their best friend, the kindest sharer of their sorrows and their joys. It is a beautiful connexion that binds in one bond of hallowed community the pastor and his flock! It is not too much to believe, that the serious impressions of religion which poor Fanny C—— found so consoling and supporting to her in her last affliction, were owing, under the blessing of God, to her having been placed in her first service in the house of a pious family.

But to return to the few remaining days of her life. I continued to visit her daily, and found her invariably in a devout and peaceful state of mind, waiting calmly and patiently her appointed time. She appeared once or twice a little anxious about her dear infant, and said, if it might be the will of God, she should rejoice if it might be taken before herself. Her prayer was granted. About ten days previously to her own death, it pleased God to take her little one home.

The time of her departure now drew nigh, and although the pale messenger had long taken his stand by her bedside, yet was the last awful summons somewhat sudden. I saw her on the evening of the day on which her babe was buried. She was perfectly calm, and said, "My child is gone; I shall soon follow it, for I feel that I am getting much weaker; but I desire to wait God's time. Whatever He sees fit to lay upon me, He will grant me strength to bear; it will all work together for my good. My blessed Saviour is still near to comfort me." Her hands were clasped; her eyes, with a supplicating look, were lifted upwards, and I observed her lips silently moving in prayer. Before I left her she said, "O how good, how gracious is God to me! I can bear any thing, any affliction; yes, it is indeed 'good to be afflicted.'" Two evenings before she died I saw her, and asked how she felt herself; she said, "Very ill, but I hope not impatient. I am graciously upheld; blessed be my God and Saviour! *there* is all my trust." Her cough was most distressing; but she said, "Never mind; it is but for a moment. Oh, those sayings are faithful and true!" My next visit was to be my last; my next conversation was to close for ever in this world an intercourse which had been peculiarly satisfactory, often delightful to me—a period

which I shall, I trust, ever cherish with sacred recollections.

Having witnessed the visible approach of death in her now livid countenance, I was prepared for the solemn hour, and went in the expectation of seeing her for the last time. Still calm and peaceful, she expressed a desire that prayer should be offered up by the clergyman who had so kindly attended her in her affliction. After this she said, "I am happy." Seeing her mother distressed, she said, "Mother, you should not grieve, you should rejoice that the hour draws nigh when I shall have no more pain, no more sorrow." She was perfectly sensible to the last, desiring her weeping relatives to be comforted. She turned her head, breathed shorter, till the last spark of life imperceptibly fled, and she was numbered among the blest.

Thus peacefully closed the earthly existence of Fanny C——, at the early age of twenty-five years, having just entered upon the important duties of a wife and mother; a period of life when the strongest affections are engaged to bind the heart to earthly objects; when this world, even to the humble cottager, offers many attractions. But to her it was otherwise; and thus early had she turned her affections from earthly to heavenly joys, and resigned herself, body,

soul, and spirit, to the will of her heavenly Father.

"You should not grieve, you should rejoice that the hour draws nigh when I shall have no more pain, no more sorrow."

"Death to the Christian is a friend,
A messenger of peace,
From earthly cares to set him free,
And bid his sorrows cease;
With joy he views in death's approach
The end of mortal strife,—
Death to the Christian is the gate
Of everlasting life."

ANN H——, THE BOATMAN'S WIFE AND WIDOW.

DIED 1845. AGED 88.

To our cottage friends this little history is particularly dedicated, because we think they will like to hear an account of one of themselves; of one who met and struggled with difficulties which those in humble life have to encounter. And it is interesting to see how a steady reliance on God their Saviour, and an active exertion on their own parts, may carry people through even the darkest and most dreary hour of their life, and give them peace in death. We are the more anxious to give an account of her and her family, because they belonged to a class of

persons not usually remarkable for temperance and other good qualities.

The subject of our narrative lived in Bangor, in North Wales, and became the wife of a steady, respectable man, who earned his living as a boatman, plying between the towns of Bangor and Beaumaris daily. Very few, in those days, crossed the ferry at Garth, and his boat was always employed to convey travellers or luggage between the two towns, and at other times engaged in taking parties to some of the many spots of interest on that beautiful coast.

When they had been married about seventeen years, the poor husband fell into a hopeless state of infirmity and lingering illness. Did Ann sit down in despair? No; she was one of those "who put their trust in the Lord;" and those who do so with a faithful and true heart will find that "He will neither leave them, nor forsake them." "Ah!" thought Ann, "my heavenly Father has placed me in this state of trial, and with his good help I will not desert the means that are still left me of maintaining our twelve children in an honest independence. I will not go to the parish." Assisted by her eldest daughter, she managed the boat, which was seen plying as usual; and thus, by good behaviour and industry, she supplied whatever contributed to the necessities

and comforts of him whom at her marriage she vowed to take, "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health; to love, cherish, and to obey, until death parted them, according to God's holy ordinance."

In the course of time Ann became a widow; her sons grew up and supported her in her old age. In 1844 Ann took to her bed, from which she never arose; she lingered until February 21, 1845, when she gave up her spirit into the hands of Him who had brought her through a long life of toil and labour rejoicing.

During some months of sickness and trial, not a murmur escaped her lips; her heart and mouth seemed to abound with feelings and expressions of love and gratitude. It was an affecting sight to see her son, a fine athletic man, in his pilot's rough dress, sitting by her bedside, attending upon her with all the affection and gentleness she had ever shown him in his earliest youth; it was indeed a "labour of love;" and the mother was now reaping in her old age, from her children and grandchildren, her reward for all the care she had bestowed on them in their equally helpless state of infancy. She used to say, "she hoped she prayed as she ought;" that "Jesus was all to her, she was nothing;" and with the greatest humility and submission would add, "I should be thankful

to go to Jesus, but his time is best." Her mind and temper, always amiable, appeared now heavenly. Raised above the troubles of the flesh, she seemed to have a foretaste of those eternal joys which the merits and death of the Saviour have prepared for all those who love Him. The day before she died, she said to her son, "John, I think I shall die to-morrow." As she did not appear worse than usual, her son proceeded a little way from shore toward Conway; but a change taking place, John was recalled, and in his arms his aged mother died without a sigh.

"She used to say that Jesus was all to her."

"How sweet to the soul are the breathings of peace,
When the still voice of Jesus bids sorrow to cease;
When his welcome of mercy falls soft on the ear,
'Come hither, ye laden—ye weary draw near!'

"There is rest for the soul that on Jesus relies,
There's a home for the homeless prepared in the skies,
There's a joy in believing, a hope and a stay
That the world cannot give, nor the world take away."

JANE D——, THE POOR NEEDLEWOMAN.

DATED 1845.

I TRUST the following short account of a visit I paid the other day to one of our poor neighbours may be interesting to some of your readers. Most delighted should I be if it were to afford some comfort to any one who is suffering under poverty or affliction like hers, by showing where, under most trying worldly circumstances, she found peace and happiness.

Jane D—— is a very poor woman, living in a small country village, where we have lately come to reside. She lives entirely alone in a retired cottage. While her mother was living with her they managed to support themselves by taking in washing, and Jane earned something by fine needlework, which she did very well; but latterly her health failed, and since her mother's death it has become so much worse that for some time past she has been quite unable to do any thing for her own maintenance. She has some internal complaint which prevents her from standing to wash and iron, and her eyes are so weak that she cannot do needlework. She told me that after many and severe struggles to support her-

self, she was obliged to apply for help to the parish. When, however, her rent is paid she has only eightpence a week left, and a small garden which she herself contrives to cultivate, on which to subsist. She receives help now and then from friends, but they are few, and this kind of help is, of course, uncertain. But though "poor in this world," she is, I really believe, "rich in faith," and, therefore, one of that blessed number who are "heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him."

Last Sunday her place at church was vacant, and knowing how highly she values the privilege of the Sabbath, we feared that she was more than usually ill. I therefore called at her cottage the next day. She came to the door with a feeble step, and seemed hardly able to totter back to her seat at the fire. She told me that she had been very ill, and suffered great pain; that sometimes she had got up in the morning, and then feeling too ill to light the fire, or do the least thing, had been forced to go to bed again; "but," she added, "God has been very gracious to me; I have enjoyed sweet communion with Him. Oh! I would not give up my hope in Christ for health, comfort, or for all the riches in the world! though," she added, "these are not to be

despised when God gives them, and if used for his glory are unspeakable blessings. But still, madam, what are they compared with a good hope of salvation through Christ? and this, thank God, I have. I never feel lonely; indeed the presence of others would interrupt the communion I enjoy with God."

She then showed me a book she had been reading, Bishop Hall's "Comfort for the Afflicted," and said she had been delighted with it, and had found great consolation from it. "There is only one little passage which I cannot quite agree to," she added; "one in which it is said, 'It is in the power of patience[1] to calm the heart in the most blustering trials; and when the vessel is most tossed, yet to secure the freight;' but I feel that nothing but the voice of God can do that; none but He can say, 'Peace, be still,' to the troubled waters, and cause that there shall be a great calm; but He does speak peace to my soul, and more particularly when I am most cast down."

She then took up her Bible, which is never far from her, and showed me the passage, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee," which, she said, ex-

[1] If Bishop Hall had been asked, "Who gives this patience?" he would have replied, "God our Saviour;" so that the difficulty is more apparent than real.

pressed her experience. I pointed out to her one or two others, such as "Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, he shall sustain thee[2]," and repeated to her those beautiful words of Archbishop Leighton, "Let the soul roll itself upon God, and adventure there its full weight;" all which seemed to express her feelings. I then talked to her of her worldly affairs, and I heard the same account as I have related above. She regretted very much her utter inability to do any thing for her own maintenance, saying she should be glad to do any thing to prevent being a burthen to the parish. I told her not to distress herself about that, for she was quite a fit object for parish relief, but that I wished she were able to do something by which she might add a little to her scanty means; "for," I added, "I fear you must be often in actual want." I felt reproved by her answer, for she replied, "No, madam, I never have wanted." A remarkable answer it seemed, till I reflected that it was a strict fulfilment of many blessed promises in Scripture, where it is said, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "There is no want to them that fear him." "I have been young and now am old; and yet saw I never the

[2] See also 1 Pet. v. 7, &c.

righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." When I returned home I looked at the thirty-fourth Psalm, in which the first two quotations occur, and could not but think how strikingly it applied to poor Jane D——, and it describes the experience of every child of God in a most beautiful manner. Are any of you, my readers, cast down and afflicted in soul or body? let me entreat you to read this Psalm, and see whether you can in any way realize it in your own hearts. It shows how we are to find peace in trouble. If with all your hearts you cry unto the Lord, He will "hear you, and save you out of all your troubles;" but it shows also what kind of people they are whom the Lord will hear and save; those who "fear God," who trust in Him, who come unto Him with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit." You must come, acknowledging that all you suffer, and far more than you suffer, you have deserved; that you have deserved nothing less than hell itself, and remembering that, "except ye repent, ye shall perish" eternally. You must remember that all sorrow and suffering is caused by sin, and therefore you should seek God's grace first to enable you to repent of this, and pray

that the sin of your soul may be forgiven you through Christ, and that you may have a firm and lively faith in Him; for this is the chief thing, and without this, health and worldly prosperity would be no blessing to you, whilst with it, as you have seen in the case of this poor disabled needlewoman just mentioned, you will be able to rejoice in the midst of poverty and suffering.

"None but He can say, 'Peace, be still.'"

"The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds o'ercast the threatening sky;
Out of the depths to Thee we call;
Our fears are great, our strength is small.

"O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guide and guard us through the storm;
Defend us from each pressing ill,
Control the waves, say, 'Peace, be still.'

"Amid the raging of the sea
Our souls still hang their hope on Thee;
Thy constant love and faithful care
Support and save us from despair."

C—— THE BRICKMAKER, HIS WIDOW AND SON.

DATED Nov. 1848.

I KNOW of nothing more deeply interesting to a reflecting mind than the contemplation of God's love, and the methods He takes for bringing mankind to a knowledge of Himself and to a love of his commandments. I am led to these considerations more particularly, from having had an opportunity lately of seeing an instance of the power of divine grace upon the heart of a poor woman, who has been brought, step by step, from the kingdom of Satan into the adopted family of God and his dear Son; and as a little Syrian captive was the appointed instrument for effecting a change in the heart of Naaman [1], so we shall here perceive that a youth was employed by divine Providence to bring conviction to the mind of his mother.

During a short visit to dear friends in the village where my early days were spent, I took occasion to see many of the poor, long known to me; and one morning I bent my steps to the cottage of H. C——. I opened the door, and just put in my head; I immediately caught the attention of poor old

[1] 2 Kings v.

Hannah. "Ah! my dear *missus*, come in; I thought I should never see you again in this world. Well, time has used you better than it has me. *You* look just the same; but I, you see, am a poor old woman just between two worlds; but"—with a bright smile, which was the more touching from the large tears which accompanied it, she continued—"all is well. Blessed be God for his mercy to me a sinner." I observed, "I hope, Hannah, you feel that, as the outward man decays, the inward man is renewed day by day, and that you are nearer to eternal life than —" "Stop, stop, not so fast; I am not so sure of all this," was her reply. "Satan is a crafty adversary, and will not let me have much peace." "It is well," I continued, "to know all this, and to feel the heart's corruption." "Yes, my dear, that is easier said than done; for 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: *who can* know it?' But," she observed, "I see your eyes are after many things you used to see in your own home, years gone by, and you are thinking of those gone before; but forget them all, and listen to poor old Hannah for the last time, for I shall never live through another winter." The woman was correct as regarded my eyes; for they were intent upon drawings stuck against the wall, and painted

by some of my family, as she observed, in years gone by. My heart was following my eyes too fast, when Hannah's observation arrested my attention. I assured her I was anxious to hear all that she had to say; and it was, as she justly said, better to forget the past, in bright anticipation of the future. "Ah! my dear, it is very difficult to do what we know is right and good; and at times I ponder over things till I am tempted to conclude there can be no hope for me; and, like David, I exclaim, 'My wickednesses are gone over my head, and are like a sore burthen, too heavy for me to bear.' Then Satan pours into my soul doubts and fears that almost drive me to despair. I take refuge in prayer; and the Lord by his Spirit has taught me, 'Cast thy burthen on the Lord.' Oh, my dear Mrs. B——! I refused forgiveness to my husband, though he sought it earnestly and with tears. O how gladly would I now not only forgive, but, if he were alive, endeavour to lead him to that Saviour who, I trust, has pardoned me! I think, through Christ, I shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; for, blessed be God, He is true; and Satan is a liar, and the father of lies. God says, 'I will cast out none who come unto me and believe in me.' Satan says, 'You would not forgive, you will not be forgiven.' Then I go to my knees and

pray. Often I find comfort; but too often Satan dares even to come between me and my great Intercessor, and hides Him from my longing eyes. Mine has been a long life of sin, pride, and rebellion. Shall I complain if spared to a long repentance?" I can give poor Hannah's words, but language fails to convey her manner, which was painfully earnest.

She is nearly eighty years old, has two shillings and sixpence weekly from her parish, and is not able to earn a penny. I said, "Well, my old friend, you have told me much respecting your soul, now a word about your body." She smiled, and said, "It tells its own tale." She laid her hand upon my arm, and, looking me in the face, said most affectionately, "Bless you, my dear *missus* (for so I shall always call you), you remember this vile body when it bore a different appearance; a time will come when it will be loathsome, and after that it shall be glorious." I gave her a trifle, and endeavoured in vain to say farewell. "Stop," she said; "I thank God for this first, and then I thank you. This gift is among the 'all things' that God has promised shall be 'added.' You know we have no business to complain so long as we have bread and water; for the words are, 'Bread shall be given, and water shall be sure.' My dear, I have, with the help of the Lord,

taught myself to read. At sixty odd I did not know a letter, now I can read both Old and New Testaments. Only think, that I had almost forgot to tell you this. Have you any old people unable to read?" I said, "One or two." "Tell them to begin to learn; and if they ask God to help them, they will soon master it. A winter evening, a farthing candle, and an earnest desire to learn, will do a deal for them. Can you stop to hear me read a chapter now, or will you call another day?" I said, "Another day," as I feared to keep my friends waiting. I then took my leave of poor Hannah C——.

I think a few particulars of her history will be interesting to those who have read thus far. She was in early life married to a man more than twenty years her senior, by whom she had eleven children. He was a brickmaker by trade, and a brute by nature. The poor woman was not only obliged to work with him at his business in the field; she had in addition, all her house-work and family to attend to, when he was taking his rest. If she ever ventured to complain, brutal usage followed, so that her life became a burthen to her. My mother felt much compassion for the woman, and hoping to make her life rather more tolerable, frequently sent for her to assist the servants, when addi-

tional help was required. During the illness of her husband, conscience told him how wicked he had been to his wife, and he then besought her to forgive him. She told him she would not. Her spirit seemed to rise with her difficulties; and I frequently remember to have heard my mother tell her, her high spirit must be brought down. She had one boy about two years old when her husband died, and on this child all her affection seemed to expend itself. The child used to follow his mother to our house when she came to char, and on one occasion was seen by my mother, who naturally inquired who he was, and on finding it was Hannah's son, ordered him some food. This was so often repeated, that he became one in the kitchen, and being a gentle child, was something of a favourite with the workpeople. The boy could read well for his age, and the Bible was his book. He used to rise in the night, light his candle by the few embers left in the grate (for they had only one room), and open his Bible, and read to himself; but when unable to contain his delight and astonishment, he would cry, "O mother! do hear this." The mother was very angry at having her rest broken, and in much passion ordered the candle to be put out, and her son to bed. But no sooner was she quiet than his little gentle voice was heard at

the throne of grace, that God would give his dear mother a new heart, and make him a good boy, so that he might work for her when she was old. It often happened that the mother heard all this, and on one occasion she said, "Why do you wish me to have another heart?" "Oh, pray don't be angry, mother, and I will tell you. You go into passions; you say naughty words; and if I were to shed tears of blood for you, it would do no good; but God can take your wicked heart away, and give you a good one."

Now this child unfortunately took up a bottle containing poison, which had been most improperly left about; and mistaking it for something else, and being very hot and thirsty, he drank so much of it that he lived only a few hours. Every thing that skill could devise was resorted to, but in vain. To the last he talked to his mother respecting her soul; and the heart that brutal violence could not subdue was almost broken by this sad affliction. After his death, when kept awake by her grief, his gentle voice seemed again to reach her ear; text after text came to her recollection, and brought conviction with them. She now determined to go to church, and became regular in her attendance there. It was some time before she could give her heart to God, but when she did, it

was in good earnest. She began to learn her letters, and then to read; and then it was that God by his Spirit made known to her her exceeding sinfulness, and taught her to look to Christ alone as all her hope and all her salvation. Years have passed since she became a changed character. She is now (1848) gentle and forgiving, but declares she shall to her last moment feel bitterness of spirit because she refused that forgiveness to her dying husband, which God, for his dear Son's sake, has given to her. Poor Hannah has one small room, which contains all her worldly goods. She has, as I said before, an allowance of two shillings and sixpence a week for fire, food, and clothing. She is neat, very clean, nay, even trim in her appearance; and her cottage is fit for a prince to set his foot in, it is so tidy. She never mentions her poverty unless asked questions about it, and seems mainly anxious to win Christ, and be found in Him. Jesus having manifested Himself to her, she knows He has promised to provide for her; He will correct her errors, instruct her mind, feed her soul, and guide her feet. All things necessary to the present life are secured to her, and a boundless inheritance beyond the grave will crown the whole; and though the remembrance of sin and Satan's devices often press down her

spirit, yet the divine words, "Fear not," bring hope and consolation to her fainting soul.

"The Lord by his Spirit has taught me, 'Cast thy burthen on the Lord.'"

"O Lord! in all our trials here,
Whate'er those trials be,
Help us, without one doubt or fear,
To cast our care on Thee.

"To look from earth to yon bright sky,
And there by faith behold
The glories hid from mortal eye,
To mortal ear untold.

"And if contempt, reproach, or loss,
We suffer for thy name,
Teach us to triumph in the cross,
To glory in the shame."

ANN W——, THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

DIED 1847. AGED 21.

ANN W—— was the eldest daughter of a large family; and (owing to adverse circumstances) she was taken at an early age to reside with an uncle and aunt, by whom she was treated with all the tenderness and affection of an only child. She was in person

very interesting, of a placid and mild countenance, extremely fair, with light blue eyes, which looked with love upon all. In disposition she was truly amiable, with much feminine softness, remarkably gentle and humble in manner, and naturally modest and retiring. Thus possessed of so many attractions, it was no wonder that she was beloved by all her relations, and valued by all her acquaintance. It is quite impossible not to love a character like this; and all those virtues are truly valuable in society which shone brightly in Ann W——. But as yet she was destitute of the one thing needful, without which he who liveth is accounted as dead in the sight of God. Without grace, however amiable, however moral, however lovely we may be in the sight of our fellow-creatures; in the eye of God, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, we shall be found wanting. Let us remember, therefore, that on the ground of personal desert no sinner can be saved, and for this reason: we have violated the precept that insured to us, while innocent, the enjoyment of happiness; and no future conduct, however exemplary, can atone for crimes previously committed. As, therefore, we are all violators of the divine law, and cannot of ourselves make atonement, either by our obedience or suffering, we are lost if

not interested in the righteousness and propitiation of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us, "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law[1]." This doctrine is hateful to our carnal hearts, and not easily understood by the natural man; but God the Spirit can make all plain to the contrite believer. But to return. The bounds of our habitation are fixed; and God in mercy had placed Ann W—— with friends who were more anxious for her eternal and spiritual welfare than for her temporal good and advancement in life, and who, both by precept and example, endeavoured to lead her to that Saviour who poured out his precious blood, and trod alone the wine-press of his Father's wrath. Ah! who is a God like unto Him? who so able, who so willing to pardon and save guilty man?

[1] Rom. iii. 25—28.

By the wish of her aunt, Ann at an early age became a teacher at the Sunday school, and a constant attendant on the ministry of the justly-beloved Mr. J——; and how far his instruction was blessed to her soul will be seen in the following brief memorial:—

It was the custom of this faithful servant of Christ to meet his teachers on the first Tuesday in the month, for the purpose of inquiring into the business of the school, and to give the teachers religious instruction. These little meetings were opened and closed with a hymn and prayer. Often did the sweet voice of Ann attract my attention: she never omitted attending these means of grace, whenever circumstances would allow of her presence. She was much beloved by the children of her class, into whose infant minds she endeavoured to instil those Gospel truths which were taking deep root in her own heart; and she manifested the warmest attachment to them, and anxiety for their improvement. The natural kindness of her disposition was evinced by her wish to conceal those trifling faults that did not call for severe reproof from the superintendent of the school. The following fact will speak for her humility. I considered her qualified in all respects to teach an older class, but she said, "Pray let me have the alphabet

class; I can talk to them better than to older girls, and I love the little ones."

Now it so happened that, about this time, two or three young men, brothers, belonging to the hamlet, were transported for poaching, and their poor families were in consequence in deep distress. Two or more of the children belonging to these unfortunate men were in Ann's class, and every time she saw them her heart seemed almost broken. I was astonished, in a Sunday or two after the fathers had set sail, to see these poor little children in mourning, and made inquiries, when I understood that Ann and her aunt had found the clothing. Now let it be remembered that both aunt and niece worked for their bread. The uncle was a shoemaker, and their occupation was binding shoes. One day I called upon them, and found the aunt in a little back room, winding silk. "Why, Mrs. W——," I said, "how is this? You have taken up another trade." She immediately put her spectacles from her eyes and replied, "I'll tell you how it is, my dear. I bind shoes for my husband, and that is his money; then my house-work is my duty; what time I can get from these things I spend as you see. The money thus obtained Tommy never will take, so I have it to give to those who want; and you know that's nothing to anybody, is it?" "Ah!"

I said, "I now know where little W——'s mourning came from." "Well," she said, "Ann gave me no peace till it was done." After a fact like this, how insignificant appears the gold listlessly dropped from the fingers of those who never know its loss, or the difficulty of obtaining it! Thus did Ann W—— endeavour to fulfil the command of her Saviour by feeding the starving soul, and clothing the naked bodies of these lambs of his fold. There are no barren trees in the Lord's vineyard, at least none of his planting. Be sure there is a spot in that vineyard for every man and woman to cultivate; it may be large or small, but there it is, and on it he or she must expend the talents God has given. All have a work to do; happy they who are not idle; but let not their own vineyard be forgotten. There is such a thing as dressing another's vineyard, and neglecting our own; against this folly we must watch and pray.

At the age of twenty years Ann was married, and twelve months after she became a young and happy wife, I saw her a dying mother. She did not survive the birth of her infant one month; but in that short period of her life, which I would more particularly notice, although suffering much, she evinced the greatest resignation, and her expressions of gratitude to those who

attended upon her were unbounded. She was frequently delirious, but in her lucid intervals talked much of her dear minister, who was at this time confined to his room by severe indisposition: this circumstance had been concealed from the poor sufferer, consequently she was in daily expectation of a visit from him. At one time, when a person entered her room, she said to her aunt, "Oh, it is Mr. J——! he is come to pray with me; it was from his lips I first heard the joyful sound of salvation." She then repeated several hymns. She began—

"Lo! on a narrow neck of land
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand
Secure, insensible;
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell."

I saw her the day before she died. She had been insensible nearly all day, but was then lying very quiet, with her eyes closed. She opened her eyes and said, "The school!" I said, "What! the New Church school?" "Yes," she said; "oh, that happy, happy school! I shall never go again." She was perfectly collected, though to all appearance very near death. I said, "Ann, is Christ precious?" With a sweet smile, and looking up in my face, she replied, "Yes."

But I said, "Is He precious to you?" Her face seemed radiant with smiles as she answered, "O yes, He is very precious! if He were not, what should I now do?" After a pause she spoke of her grandfather, an eminently pious man, who had died a short time previously. She remarked, "He has obtained *his* crown." Her poor, weeping aunt bent over her, and made answer, "Yes, my dear, and *you* will have a crown." "Yes," Ann replied very quickly, "and a white robe." Then, with animation which seemed too much for her poor frame, she continued, "Ah, yes! a crown of glory and a white robe; a robe of Christ's righteousness, not mine. It will be all white, quite white." She was now exhausted, and, after an interval, my sister and myself rose to depart. She put out her hand; I took it and said, "Farewell, Ann! I hope we shall meet in another and a brighter world." She said, "Good bye, madam; good bye!" And then, after a pause, she exclaimed, raising her languid eyes to heaven, "Grant, good Lord, grant that we may meet in another and a happier world! God bless you! do look at my poor little babe, and take it in your arms before you go." We now left poor Ann, fearing to stay longer. Her patience and faith held out to the last. Thus did the seed sown in health bring forth abundant fruit in this season of affliction.

She spoke incessantly of Christ, and redemption through Him; she expressed no desire to live, nor any fear to die, nor had she any difficulty in speaking to those much older than herself, on the all-engrossing subject of Christ and redemption through Him. Husband and child were committed to her God in faith, and hope of a reunion. She remained in this frame of mind till her spirit left its earthly tabernacle, to enter, as we trust, the presence of the Saviour, whose humble follower she was on earth.

Reader, it remains to be asked if you have ever striven, by any means, to promote Christ's glory and kingdom? Are you ready to feed his lambs, if called upon? Ann W——, in feeding others, obtained spiritual nourishment for her own soul. Are you willing to contribute to any of those societies which have for their aim and end Christ's glory? Ann's weekly penny was never withheld from the collector. Do you endeavour to glorify Him in your walk and conversation? Do you meet God in his church? Do you seek Him in private prayer? Do you visit the sick, or comfort the afflicted? Or are none of these things to your taste? Once again—have you ever considered that you must die, and that after death you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and see your Maker face to face; and

that all your thoughts, words, and actions will be laid open before assembled men and angels? Perhaps you think, I am too young for these sad thoughts. Nay, not so; Ann was young. But again, you say in your heart, But it will damp my joy! Could you have seen Ann's countenance, when speaking of Christ and his salvation, you would not have said her joy was damped. Ann W—— was young, happy, in health, a wife, a mother; beloved by friends, truly respected by her superiors, labouring in Christ's vineyard, walking in the paths of religion, and to all seeming she had a long life of usefulness before her. But in one short year all that bright vision had passed, and death claimed his due. Does this seem sad? Surely not; for her ransomed soul rested upon Christ, the Rock of ages. Death had lost its sting, and the dark grave its victory. The youthful wife and mother is beyond the vail, and inherits the promise of her Lord, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, and I will clothe thee in white raiment. I will make thee a pillar in the temple of my God, and thou shalt go no more out; thou shalt sit with me on my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne[1]."

[1] Rev ii. 10; iii. 12. 21.

Dear reader! again I would urge upon you the value of your own soul. Do not think lightly of these simple memorials; they are truth, unembellished indeed, derived from humble life. Oh, could some of these once simple ones now speak to you, what a wondrous account they would give! Or could you see them as they are, how bright the vision! Kings and princes would be at best an empty show compared to them; and how they would plead with you to enter into covenant with your God! They would remind you that in the present world there are pricking briers and grieving thorns, and at the best this is but a waste howling wilderness; but if you are in Christ, ere long you shall pass the waters of Jordan, and behold the city of your glorious King.

"This is but a waste and howling wilderness; but if you are in Christ, ere long you shall behold the city of your glorious King."

"Ye happy pilgrims, come with me
To yonder eminence, and see
The city of your glorious King;
Then with your hearts rejoice and sing,
'Tis it! how glorious to behold!
We shall be there ere long:
O let the timid now be bold,
And let the faint be strong!
Sing, sing ye pilgrims on your way,
Let joy fill every breast!
Our King will all our toils repay,
When we have gain'd our rest."

SARAH M——, THE DOMESTIC SERVANT,

WHO HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF A PIOUS MISTRESS.

DIED 1848.

IN the corner of that old churchyard, under the elm-trees, and close by the pathway, where the graves are most crowded, lies all that was mortal of Sarah M——. In the early part of the year 1836, I was in the habit of visiting a poor woman considered to be in the last stage of consumption. My attention was also arrested by the daughter, who was still suffering from the effects of rheumatic fever, but she was considered as recovering from the attack. There was something peculiarly interesting in Sarah M——'s appearance, though in manner she was rather abrupt, and on a close inspection of her countenance an expression of discontent might be observed. She was about thirty years of age. When I either read or talked to her mother she was attentive, but apparently unmoved. Promise or threatening seemed alike to fall unheeded upon her soul. Neither the happiness of God's people nor

the misery of the lost seemed to affect her. This state continued for two or three months, notwithstanding I constantly endeavoured to arouse her from her indifference. One day I was speaking to the mother of the joys of heaven, and the sorrows of the lost, and urging upon her the necessity of prayer to God for his Spirit to convince her of sin, and to lead her to Christ. In the midst of our conversation Sarah burst into a flood of tears. It was some time ere I could understand the reason of this. I waited patiently till nature had had its course, when poor Sarah, still weeping bitterly, asked me, "If I did not think that, in hell, those would suffer most torment who had known their duty, and had neglected it?" I answered, "Those who know their Lord's will, and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; but," I continued, "the fountain is still open to all returning sinners, and if they repent, the blood of Jesus is an all-sufficient atonement, and He offers a free pardon to all who come to Him, forsaking their sins. To backsliders also pardon is promised, if they will turn again into the narrow way of life."

The ice was now broken, the stony heart seemed replaced by a heart of flesh; and in our subsequent conversations Sarah M—— made known to me the following particu-

lars:—She had been in service, and a pious mistress had taken great pains with her. This lady was in the habit of reading the Bible with her servants; and on the Sunday evening in particular she endeavoured to explain the Word of God to them in a simple and affectionate manner. At first the novelty pleased Sarah; she liked the reading, and made some resolutions to amend her life; but as these resolves were made without prayer, and in her own strength, they were soon broken. She got tired of her place, and left her good mistress for no assignable reason. She then went far astray, and joined in all kinds of vanities and follies; but still by the restraining grace of God was kept moral in conduct. At this period of her history conscience often testified against her; she knew she was living without God; she remembered her good mistress and her Sabbath instruction; she knew no peace, and often did she bitterly regret leaving her situation and its many privileges. It pleased her heavenly Father to afflict her with fever, and now she "heard the rod, and who appointed it." From the time she shed those tears I before mentioned, she became much distressed, and very anxious respecting her soul. Once a pious neighbour called, and found her searching her Bible for an instance of one like herself, but she declared she could not find one

who had had her privileges, and had so sinned against light and conscience. For several months she was much cast down. She often read the fifty-first Psalm, the first chapter of Isaiah, and the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians; all of which, she said, suited her exactly. At length this season of darkness passed away, and the Lord made her to understand his pardoning love, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. She said to me one day, "I do believe the Lord has heard me for his dear Son's sake. Before this, when I have endeavoured to pray, my thoughts wandered, and prayer itself was a burthen; last evening I was very sorrowful, and thought the Lord would never hear and pardon me, for I had no pleasure in Him; but," she continued, "last evening I could pray. I felt the love of Christ in a way I never did before. I saw all that my Saviour had done and suffered for me, and now I can rejoice in the Lord." This peace of mind remained for some time.

Poor Sarah's health now began to give way, and a rapid decline seemed hastening her to the grave. In this time of her weakness Satan took advantage of her, so that for several weeks she was nearly in despair. I called one day and found her in bed, very ill indeed; her attendant considered her very near death, and I thought her insensible, as

she did not answer any inquiries respecting her health. I said, "Sarah, death has no sting or terror for those who are in Christ Jesus." "Oh," she instantly exclaimed, "but I am such a sinner, I am such a sinner!" "Yes," I said, "I know you are, and for such sinners as you, Christ shed his precious blood on the cross." "Oh," she again said, "but I am such a sinner, I am such a sinner!" I answered, "But the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." I then read to her; she became calm and composed. Her minister saw her the next day, and found her in deep waters of affliction. He prayed and read with her, and again she received consolation. She fell into a sweet sleep, and on awaking told those friends who were watching round her bed that Christ was all her hope and all her trust; that He was now waiting to conduct her soul to his Father's presence. Thus, with the praises of her Saviour on her lips, she breathed out her soul and fell asleep in Him.

Such is the short and imperfect account of Sarah M——, who was at all times an honest, industrious, good servant to earthly masters and mistresses, who gave abundant testimony to her worth. Her parents spoke of her in the highest terms of affection; they said she was dutiful and kind to them. But

when the Spirit of truth opened her eyes, what was her testimony concerning herself? "I am such a sinner, I am such a sinner!" And though Satan for a time was permitted to harass her, yet to him her God had said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;" for in the end she was enabled to "rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh."

Let us be encouraged from this brief history to cast our bread upon the waters. The seed may long remain dormant, but it may spring up when we little think, or where we little expect. Sarah's good mistress will, in all probability, never know how the seed sown by her was watered by the Spirit, and sprang up to life eternal. But the Lord will say to her, "Well done," "for inasmuch as thou didst it unto one of these, thou didst it unto me. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"Her minister saw her the next day, and found her in deep waters of affliction."

"God of our life, to Thee we call;
Afflicted at thy feet we fall;
When the great waterfloods prevail,
Leave not our trembling hearts to fail.

"Friend of the friendless and the faint,
Where shall we lodge our deep complaint?
Where but with Thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor?

" Then hear, O Lord, our humble cry,
And bend on us thy pitying eye;
To Thee their prayer thy people make;
Hear us, for our Redeemer's sake."

MRS. B——,

THE POOR BUT CONTENTED WIDOW.

DIED 1849.

THE trial of poverty is great indeed, but in that trial many have found that " Godliness with contentment is great gain." The best way to prevent murmuring and fretfulness in difficulty is, to remember the many temporal and spiritual blessings we are permitted to enjoy; and then we shall feel, in the language of Scripture, " I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant [1]."

This meek and contented spirit of which I have been speaking, and which I seek to recommend to others, and would humbly endeavour to obtain, was most beautifully exemplified in the character and conduct of Widow B——, who was left early in life to struggle alone, with a large family, with precarious employment, in a thickly populated manufacturing district.

[1] Gen. xxxii. 10.

Many were the times that her *more spirited* neighbours told her she ought to put herself forward, and make her case known to the gentry; and they generally ended by observing, "But you have no spirit; you would pine before you would knock about as we do." "The Lord will provide," said the meek sufferer. "Oh, yes! the Lord will provide when you have killed yourself by working early and late for your family. I call it providence when things come without making myself a slave." "The Lord careth for the sparrows," again answered Widow B——, "and I know He cares for me and for my little ones." "Oh, very fine!" said her neighbour, "but sparrows help themselves sometimes, don't they?" "And so do I," said the contented widow; "I work myself, and my poor children work too."

Time, which neither joy nor sorrow can arrest in its flight, passed on; but the poverty of the widow did not pass away with it. She continued poor to the last. Her children grew up, but their mother's inheritance was theirs. One married a soldier, and proved a source of much sorrow to her. Another daughter married, and before long her husband left her and her infant a burthen upon the widow. Though trials thickened, the spirit of contentment triumphed in the midst of all. "Well, I will say no more,"

said her neighbour; "I do believe you would say 'Thank you' to persons if they walked over you."

I remember once saying to my mother, "I do not think God loves Widow B——, He keeps her so poor." My mother said, "You had better ask her if *she* thinks so." Accordingly I did so. "Love me!" said the widow, "yes, indeed, my dear child, He loves me more than I can tell." "Why, He makes you very poor, and lets people be very unkind to you,—is that a proof of his love?" "Come to me," said the old woman, "and I will tell you, miss, some of the proofs of God's love to me. He gave his Son to die for me. He made me love and trust that Son; He gives me a contented mind. He also puts it into your mother's heart to send me a load of coals for Christmas-day. Not long since I had neither bread nor food of any kind in my house, and it was on the Sabbath too. My heart was sad, and I was hungry. For a little moment the Lord seemed to hide Himself, and I was cast down; more shame for me to be so." We asked anxiously, "What did you do?" She said, "I told God my case, and when I rose from my knees I did not feel to want food. I dressed and went to the house of God, and there the Lord fed me with the bread that came down from heaven. As I walked home

I met many coming from the bakehouse with their dinners, but I did not covet them. I thanked the good Lord for making me sure that 'man doth not live by bread alone.' I entered my cottage, and went to the shelf for my Bible, and there stood a loaf of bread. I never tasted so sweet a morsel in my life." "How came it there?" we asked. She said, "You know I live up an entry; so I do not always lock my door, because my neighbour looks at my fire sometimes. I know she did not put the bread there, for she is poor too; but the good Lord put it into some one's heart to place it there, but I never could find out who it was. Now do you think God does not love me?" I remember the poor widow's face at the moment she asked this question, and my own feelings on the occasion. Her countenance was lighted up with holy gratitude and meek resignation. My feeling was, "Well, a loaf of dry bread is no great thing to be so thankful for, after all." She told us she had never wanted for long, and that God had always found her a friend in her necessity. During a long life she was never known to have a quarrel with any one; and, though frequently reproached for her mean spirit, never reviled again. She endured, as seeing Him who is invisible, and this is the secret of all meekness and patience. A sense of the presence of God turns things, grievous per-

haps in themselves, into real blessings. A meek and quiet spirit gives to its possessor a peace little understood by those who despise it.

Widow B—— died in what the world calls deep poverty. She was, however, rich in faith; and those neighbours who had so often blamed her for her meekness were obliged to confess that Widow B—— enjoyed more happiness in the end than they did; for nothing, they said, seemed to trouble her but sin, and that always gave her pain. I was too young to understand her character, and too ignorant of the Gospel and its graces to appreciate them for their own sake; but young as I was I have never forgotten Widow B——, and how I endeavoured, in her presence, "to be good," as children term it. It is astonishing how soon children read character, and what lasting impressions are made upon their minds by incidents that seem small in themselves, and are overlooked by older persons. It ought to make us very careful in their presence to enforce precept by example. After all, it is doing, not saying, that is (or ought to be) the test of character. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," is a golden precept from the treasury of God's Word. Let us earnestly pray to be meek and gentle, that so we may find rest to our

souls. We know how satisfactory rest is to the weary body; but who can tell the inexpressible satisfaction of that rest which shall be enjoyed by every saved soul, in the presence of the once meek and lowly Saviour of a lost world?

"He gives me a contented mind."

"Whate'er the portion of earth's store
My Father's love assigns,
Why should I wish that portion more,
Or doubt his wise designs?

"He knows the subtle tempter's wiles,
He knows my treach'rous heart,
How soon ensnared by earthly smiles,
And prone from Him to part.

"Have I not knelt before his throne,
And pour'd my earnest prayer;
Have not I said, 'Thy will be done,'
And sought his guiding care?

"And shall I dare to murmur now,
Against his righteous will?
Nay—rather let me meekly bow,
And seek that guidance still.

"What though in lowly paths He lead,
If God be with me there,
His tender love supplies each need,
And sweetens every care.

" Then oh, my Father! still decide,
Whate'er for me is best;
Through life's short journey be my guide,
And bring me to thy rest."

MRS. V—— AND HER DAUGHTER MARY, THE CRIPPLE.

THEY DIED 1849.

How appropriately is maternal affection employed to illustrate the love of God! It begins with the helpless infancy, and ends only with the life, of the beloved child. With a mother all personal considerations are swallowed up in one predominant feeling. Ease and pleasure are resigned; days of fatigue and nights of watchfulness are passed without a murmur; and for her whole reward she desires only the safety and welfare of her child. When this principle is beheld in all its native force, and yet prevented from degenerating into weakness and running into excess by the more potent influence of religion, nothing can be more beautiful. A Christian mother trains her child for God,—that is her first ambition; and beyond all things she seeks for it an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. To form its character, and

guide its inexperience, and to guard it from temptation, is her anxious labour. To endeavour to inculcate truth and uprightness, she is careful that her own example bears out her precept. Earnestly seeking assistance and direction from the Fountain of all truth, both for herself and her child, she looks forward to the blessed period when she may rejoicing say, "Here am I, Lord, and the children Thou hast given me." There are, we know, cruel and careless mothers; we would trust, however, that they are exceptions. Many are fatally injudicious; these lay up for themselves a store of unhappiness. Others, again, are indifferent to all spiritual graces and blessings, if only their children are well established in the world, forgetting that even the very fashion of it is passing away. Nay, some parents will tell you, "However necessary the grace of God may be to renew those who are steeped in crime, yet childhood and youth stand in no need of an influence to convert them, beyond what their own vigorous faculties and generous affections are capable of exercising." Those, they say, who are "accustomed to do evil," may require the Spirit of God to constrain them to do well; but young people are too susceptible to require more than a faithful appeal to Scripture and the admonitions of friendship. Such mis-

taken persons may rest assured, that the same Almighty grace is needed to change the heart of the child as that of the hardened sinner; "for the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth." But as life and history are chiefly made up of common incidents, and these incidents contribute to illustrate character, and convey instruction, in a much greater degree than those circumstances that are more rare and splendid, I shall describe the devoted affection of a mother in common life, and the beneficial effects resulting to herself thereby.

Nearly thirty years since, I was requested to become a collector for a charitable society. The district allotted to myself and colleague was a large one. We were both young, and but little accustomed to the duties and difficulties of our office. We were full of hope, and unbounded in our expectations. We determined to do what we could, and with collecting-bag and cards in hand for subscribers' names, we sallied forth. We were well received; and though we met with a few strange incidents, we had much to encourage us in the work we had undertaken. On our return home we were asked how we had succeeded. Our answer was, "Very well upon the whole; but," we said, "one woman seemed very cross, and we quite expected to be sent out of the house very quickly." On

asking if they wanted a Bible, "No," said the woman, "we have more books now than we read." "Mother," said a weak voice from a small bed near the fire, "ask the ladies to come in." The mother did as requested. We ventured near the bed, and found upon it a pale, emaciated, interesting-looking girl of about sixteen. Our pity was excited, and we began anxiously to make inquiries respecting her health. We learned she was an only daughter, suffering from white-swelling in the knee, which three medical men of experience had pronounced incurable, and said that nothing but amputation could save the girl's life. I am not much ashamed to say, we forgot the duties of our office in our concern for the sufferer, who at length called our attention to it by saying, "Have you a Testament with a large print, ladies?" We showed our specimens of types, and the girl asked her mother to pay twopence a week for her to have one to read. The mother immediately complied. We desired her to send to our house for any thing the girl might wish for, and assured her our mother would allow her to have milk, or whatever the medical man considered best for her. The mother's only answer was a burst of grief and thankfulness. There was no need for the meek, patient sufferer to tell her mother to open

the cottage door for us; she did it of her own accord, and blessed us as we left her dwelling.

Our visits to Mary V—— were very frequent, and every thing we could devise for her comfort and amusement was resorted to. The New Testament was given long before the price was paid, and that book was her consolation and delight. We brought her other books, but they did not satisfy her. Her sufferings were extreme; so much so, that she consented to have the operation performed, but it was considered too late to venture. Night and day did the anxious mother stand by that bed of pain. We, too, often witnessed the agony of poor Mary, who only seemed to find ease on the bosom of her mother. No murmur escaped either of them; the health of the child was all that the mother desired, and her restoration the only subject of her prayer. But God had better things in store for both, and this sad affliction was the means He graciously used to bring them to Himself. There was a father and two brothers, but they ate, drank, and slept as usual, regardless of all but their necessary food and personal comfort. The father solaced himself with his pipe, and the brothers with their vain companions, till their hour of rest drew nigh. When all was silent in the cottage, the faint voice of poor

Mary V—— might be heard; and on looking through the half-closed shutter the girl would have been seen sitting up in bed, with a small candle near her, reading to her poor mother the words of truth, hope, and consolation. During the whole of her child's illness Mrs. V—— never left the house, and for some months only rested on her daughter's bed. One day, while we were sitting with Mary, she called her mother. "Mother, dear mother," said the girl, "death to me will be gain; and if you could know what I suffer in one day, even you would desire it for me. The fear of death is gone, since my book has told me where to look for rest and spiritual health." To us she said, "When I am dead, promise to be to my dear mother what you have been to me; and, oh! close her eyes for me. It should have been my office; but God knows best which to take and which to leave. Mother, read my book; it has been life from the dead to me; it will be your consolation when nothing else will give you any pleasure." We all promised to attend to the requirements of poor Mary; and very soon after this interview she died in peace, and with a good hope in Christ her almighty Saviour.

We visited the bereaved parent very soon after the daughter's death, and hoped to have found her in some measure resigned; but

we were not prepared for the change which had taken place. On entering the cottage we found poor Mary's bed removed, and the mother's chair occupying its place. She rose to receive us, and for a short space there was silence. She then laid her hand upon her heart, and said, "It is broken. She cannot come to me, but, blessed be God! I can go to her." From this time her strength declined, and very soon she took to her bed. We insisted upon calling in medical aid; we were assured, however, that nothing could be done for her bodily health. To our great satisfaction, we found that the same precious truths which had been salvation to the child were also, by the Spirit's teaching, made of saving efficacy to the mother. When the minister visited her, he read the fifty-first Psalm to her, and she afterwards said, "I thank him. Since his visit I have been led to see more of my sin than I did before. I see I made an idol of my child's body. I did not regard her soul. Instead of teaching her, she has taught me. I ought to have endeavoured to live for the sake of those who remain, to lead them in the right way, and to serve and glorify God my Saviour. But it is too late now; let me be a warning to you. Let nothing on earth come between your souls and God; and if ever you should become mothers, let your children's souls be

your first and last consideration." Soon after this conversation we were called to "close her eyes." Her last words to us were blessings.

So died this devoted mother. After her death the father and sons became extremely vicious in their habits, and lived in open sin. Their once neat, quiet cottage became dirty, and the scene of shameless vice. Often did we wonder how far a wife and mother's presence might have restrained these wicked ones; and while we deplored their sin, and faithfully admonished them, we rejoiced that neither poor Mary nor her loving mother were on earth, to be grieved by their vices, or disgraced by their relationship. Still the boys were deeply to be pitied; they had never been trained to love and serve God, and their poor mother did not live long enough to say to them, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it[1]." She did not discover her duty, till it was, as she observed, "too late." Let us pray that these two sad words may never have an application to us. Let us work while it is day, for the night of death is fast approaching unto all.

[1] Ps. xxxiv. 11. 14.

"That book was her consolation and delight. We brought her other books, but they did not satisfy her."

"THESE BY PETER HEYLIN, GIVEN WITH A BIBLE.

"If thou art merrie, here are aires;
If melancholie, here are prayers;
If studious, here are those things writt
Which may deserve thy ablest wit;
If hungry, here is food divine;
If thirsty, nectar, heavenly wine..

"Read then; but first thyself prepare
To read with zeale, and mark with care;
And when thou readst what here is writt,
Let thy best practice second it.
So twice each precept read shall bee,
First in The Booke and next in Thee.

"Thus read, thus sing, and then to thee
The very earth a heaven shall be;
If thus thou readest, thou shalt find
A private heaven within thy minde;
And singing thus before thou die,
Thou sing'st thy part to those on High."

'MARTHA J——, THE BACKSLIDER RECLAIMED.

DIED 1849.

THERE is, in the village of P——, a neat little cottage, which, at the time of which I

am writing, was covered over with trailed roses and other creepers. The garden was nicely kept, and never without flowers of some kind. The windows were bright and clean; the curtains extremely white—not hanging untidily for want of a little care, as I have too often seen. All was in good order in the cottage of Martha; she and her husband had saved money in service, and did not allow themselves to think of being married until they were able to furnish this cottage in a neat, plain, but at the same time, substantial manner; and also to take the little field near, and purchase two cows. They moreover added a little maid to their snug establishment, who assisted Martha in her house and dairy. Here this couple had lived and prospered in worldly things for years before I knew the village. Martha had, however, been afflicted with rheumatism, and *dirty* neighbours said it was so often cleaning the house which caused this distressing complaint to return so often; for my own part, I am inclined to agree with Martha, and say it was constitutional. Whatever was the immediate cause, the effect was sad, for it kept poor Martha from the house of God; at least, it furnished her with an excuse for her absence. When I first took up my abode in the village, I called at the cottage, and found poor

Martha willing to talk to me about all her worldly affairs without any reserve. Not long after, the husband died rather suddenly, and, without delay, I called upon the widow. I told her God was speaking to her in this affliction, and that, in effect, He was saying, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." "Oh," she said, "I know all that, I know all that, but I am a backslider! Oh, I used to have such joys, and such delightful thoughts! Ah, (with a deep sigh,) I shall never see such times as those again!" I was at a loss what to answer at the moment; at length I observed, "Why, Martha, you are now sixty years old; how long have you been sliding from bad to worse?" She answered, "For many, many years." I observed, "It is high time you should endeavour to escape from your present bondage. I fear you have never yet known either the true peace of the Gospel, or your own need of a Saviour." "Oh dear! how can you talk so very unkind to me, a widow woman? Pray did not David and Peter both backslide? and nobody will deny they were good. Now, ma'am, you are not in earnest, are you?" said poor Martha. "Yes, my friend; I am very much in earnest, and I will tell you why I am so. You seem to think, because two good men (as you very justly style

them) most fearfully fell, that therefore they are an example to you; or rather, you make their sin your justification. Just consider a moment the conduct of these men after their fall. The prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to bring David's sin before him; and when he had done so, David did not seek to excuse himself, but said, 'I have sinned against the Lord; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.' Now hear David speak again in the forty-second Psalm, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night.' Then read the fifty-first Psalm, and tell me whether your sorrow has been like David's. Now we will speak a little of Peter. You will find that, *immediately* the cock crew, he remembered the word of Jesus, 'and he went out and wept bitterly;' we do not find that Peter lived on in sin, but, on the contrary, he set himself to do his Master's work." "Well," said the widow, "that is all true, I dare say; but now, ma'am, tell me just what you think about me, for I wish to be saved." "I am thankful to hear you say so, my poor friend, and I will endeavour to make you understand me; and I pray that God's

Spirit may enable you to understand yourself. In the first place, then, I never like to hear persons talk about joys, and dreams, and visions, and so forth, and that years ago they knew the Lord, but that now they are cold and dead, and without God in the world; and yet they have seemed tolerably comfortable all these years, if worldly things have prospered. Now a true Christian is always striving against sin, which is always ready to stir within him; but those that sit down in sin prove that they are under the dominion of Satan, who is constantly saying, 'Peace, peace,' when God says, 'There is no peace to the wicked.' Believers, it is true, are subject to many changes in their experience. It is gladness one day, and perhaps sorrow another. It has been well observed, 'Before a man has a true sense of his own miseries, the complaints and infirmities of the saints are often a stumbling-block; but after a conviction of sin takes place, these very things will administer comfort.' I trust that you may find it so." "But," said Martha, "what am I to do?" "You must at once determine to give up *all* sin; you must attend upon God in his house; you must read his Word, with earnest prayer for a wise and understanding heart, and be willing to give up all for Christ and Him crucified." She said,

"I will do as you say; but, indeed, this world clings to us to the last." "You are wrong again, Martha; it is *we* who cling to *it*. If you had a room in this neat cottage half as badly kept as your poor soul has been, you would never rest till it was in order. How you would search into every corner, and even get a light to assist you in your examination!" "Ah!" she said, "I have done that before now; for I hate dirt with all my heart, that I do." "Well, then," I said, "remember, your heart is full of all that is unclean; it is desperately wicked, and out of it proceed evil thoughts and evil actions, and indeed all that defiles the man. Now you must search this heart of yours just as you would a dirty room, the state of which you now discover for the first time. Remember, the Word of God is to be your light to assist you. David, in Psalm cxix. 105, says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.'" "Well," said Martha, "I think I know what you mean. I hear some of the neighbours say they attend your family prayers; may I come too? I can hear your bell ring, and I am very lonely in an evening, and you know it will help to pass the time a little." I said it would give us much pleasure to see her in an evening, and I hoped God would make it good for her to be one amongst us. I rose to de-

part, but poor Martha said, "I feel rather strange; I don't like all you have been saying about me and my heart, and yet I want you to stay and talk more to me; for if you are right, I am wrong; for I never can suppose my heart is so very unclean as you seem to think." I said, "I can only assure you, Martha, that I have said what I believe to be true, and what I read in my Bible; read yours with prayer, and believe nothing you do not find there; and, if spared, I will call again in a week or two, and then we will have more conversation on the subject. If you want me, you can speak to me after our family prayer, as you say it is your intention to join us at that time." "Well now, look here, ma'am," continued Martha, "the case is this: you have *unsettled* my mind; but I am sure you mean well, so I will *try* and do as you bid me. But stop, I mean to give you something for the Missionary Society, and I may as well do it now. So saying, she gave me her first contribution, and I took my departure from the cottage. On my return the sun was fast declining, and I almost wondered at the length of time I had spent with this poor woman. At eight o'clock that evening our prayer-bell sounded, and, true to her purpose, there was Martha, beautifully neat and clean, in her widow's garments. I did not take notice to any one of

my visit, but I certainly hoped that what had been said might do good.

Martha J—— continued to be a very regular attendant at our family prayer, with other of her neighbours. Our plan was, a short exposition of some portion of the Word of God, a hymn, and prayer; and, unless any thing particularly required it, no conversation ever took place on those occasions. Some weeks passed before I had another conversation with the widow. I purposely abstained from calling, hoping that God would bless the reading of his Holy Scriptures, and teach her, by his Spirit, far better than I could. This I felt certain He would do, if she were sincere in her desires after a knowledge of Christ and his salvation. God has said by his prophet Jeremiah, "For I know the thoughts I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with *all* your heart [1]."

When next I bent my steps towards the cottage, I had many hopes and fears respecting its widowed inmate. She received me with a smile; her Bible was upon

[1] Jer. xxix. 11—13.

her knee, and there were evident traces of tears on her cheek. I said, "I am glad to find you thus occupied, Martha, because it leads me to believe you have been doing what we are told to do, that is, 'Search the Scriptures.'" She shook her head, and said, "Yes, they testify of Christ, and against my sin." "It is well, Martha," I observed, "that you find it so, of a truth." She added, "I am miserable. On Sunday I went to church, and the text was, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and *all* the people who forget God.' The minister said, 'Now perhaps there may be some persons in this house of prayer who may have forgotten God for many years.' It made me start, and something within me seemed to say, That is *me;* and, oh, how I have forgotten my God! I have thought as little of my sins as I have thought of that righteous and holy God against whom they have been committed. Oh, with what lying excuses have I endeavoured to make myself believe that I was safe! Think of sixty years spent in the bondage of Satan!" I said, "Let no one turn off your mind from these things; and if any ignorant neighbours would persuade you that you are too anxious, do not believe them, but go again to the throne of grace, and ask God to deepen your convictions of sin. No person can tell the importance

of your present circumstances. I believe the Spirit of God is striving with you, and either you will give yourself up to his guidance, or you will resist his gracious influence, and He will depart from you." "But," said the poor woman, "I am so fearful my life may not be spared for repentance. See how soon my poor man was called into the presence of God, and he had no more thoughts about his soul than I had." After some few more remarks I rose to return home, when Martha observed, with much earnestness, "Do you think there is any hope for one like me?" "Most certainly," I answered, "in the use of all appointed means there is hope for all who are anxiously inquiring, 'What must I do to be saved?'" "Oh! if you could be with me always; I want a friend always near me, for I am so ignorant." I said, "Martha, you have a friend ever near you, even Jesus; and you have only to ask Him, and He will come unto you, and will abide with you. Then you have the Bible, which will talk with you, and answer all your anxious questions. Then you have the Spirit to lead you into all truth, and to comfort you. Now, what am I to all this?" "Oh," she said quickly, "nothing, nothing! did I not just now tell you of my shameful ignorance? The Lord pardon me!"

In a short time I again called; there was a deep solemnity upon her countenance; and when I asked her how she found herself in health, she answered, "I do not think much about my body, though, I trust, I am thankful to be free from rheumatism, because it enables me to attend church. I never go there on a Sunday but something I hear sends me to my knees. Yesterday I was rather more comfortable; but when in church the minister said, 'Wherefore, I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a *pure* heart and humble voice.' This time I said, That is not for me, for my heart is not pure in thy sight, O God;' and then I cannot tell you the pain I felt." I said, "I fear, Martha, you do not as yet quite understand the meaning of the word 'pure' in that address. It means pure in intention. You must read those sentences which go before, and you will find they are confessions of sin and acknowledgments of our necessities. Then the minister addresses the people, and exhorts them, with pure (or sincere) hearts and humble voices, to say after him; and then follows the general confession, and you will find there is nothing like *purity* of heart mentioned; but you called yourself therein a miserable sinner, and besought God to spare them that confess their faults." "True, true," said

Martha, "sixty years of ignorance must make a person blind and deaf, and Satan is never at a loss. However, I bless God for my Prayer Book as well as my Bible, for both speak the same words. They both tell me I am a sinner, and that Christ is a Saviour. Oh, that I could add, *my* Saviour!" I observed, "In time I hope you may, Martha; but you must remember, faith is one thing, and assurance another. Faith is necessary to our salvation, assurance is not necessary." "Well," she said, "I will wait patiently (if I can), and then, perhaps, I shall reap, if I faint not. I shall double my missionary money, and I will tell you why I shall do so: not because I think to purchase heaven that way, but because, perhaps, it may enable some good man to go and tell some poor widow like me that she has forgotten God for sixty years; and I will pray, too, that she may find pardon for her sin, and rest in Christ. You know there will be more hope for her than for me." "No," I said, "not more hope of pardon, for Christ suffered once for *all;* but, certainly, there is more excuse for a heathen than for you." "For sure you are right again: excuse my sad ignorance." "Martha," I asked, "did you always consider yourself such an ignorant person?" "No, indeed, I did not, ma'am; I thought few knew more

than I did; but I think nobody can read the Bible, and pray to know themselves, but the first thing they will learn is their ignorance."

Poor Martha still continued seeking wisdom from on high, and the more she seemed to learn, the more she was humbled on account of her long forgetfulness of God. Her cottage was still kept beautifully clean, but she told me it had not now the first place in her thoughts. One day she said, "I shall go to my grave sorrowing, and never be able to say with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God;' but if I am saved, I shall then be satisfied."

Soon after this interview, I was rather suddenly called to attend the sick bed of the widow, who, I was informed, had been attacked with English cholera, and was considered in some danger. I hastened to the cottage, and found Martha extremely ill. As soon as she saw me, she put out her hand, and with a smile said, "I wanted to see you, for at last I have found comfort. I see all plain, now sixty years of ignorance are passing away. I am escaping from the bondage you once mentioned to me. I shall soon stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. I thank you for those words of admonition; yea, I thank God, through Jesus Christ." I said, "Martha, you tell me nothing respecting the

pain you are suffering; it must be severe." "Yes, it has been, and is now, as the damp of death testifies; but my peace is more than my pain." "Are your present feelings any thing like those joys, and dreams, and visions you once mentioned to me?" "Oh, name them not! I spoke as the father of lies dictated; it was all delusion; I had heard others talk so, and I thought it sounded well." I said, "You must talk no more now, or you will be exhausted." She said, "I have but a short time to live, and I must talk to you: read me the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah." She made a few simple remarks on each verse. "Now I understand the tenth verse," she said, "I can trust in the Lord, and stay upon my God. I have read that chapter many times, but never understood it as I do this day. I cannot express to you the light that shines within me: and those hymns we use in church, oh, how much comfort I have found in them! I have learned several; when you call again I will tell you which I mean, that is, if I live till to-morrow." I called early next morning, and found Martha much more feeble in body, and evidently near her end; but still her mind was calm, and her peace perfect. After I had made a few inquiries about her health, she said, "Now I will repeat my hymn to you." She

began, and her tone and manner are not easily to be forgotten,—

"When gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark, and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who not in vain
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my wants, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears."

She repeated the hymn through, and desired that I would pay particular attention to the last verse, for that was most to our purpose just then. She again began,—

"And oh! when I have safely past
Through every conflict but the last,
Still, still unchanging, watch beside
My painful bed, for Thou hast died;
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the latest tear away."

Martha looked up and said, "Ah! it is that 'Still, still unchanging' which is such a comfort at a time like this, when all other things are changed. Why," she continued, "even *you* are changed, for I can let you go now; and though none can tell how much I love you, yet I can do without you, because *He* is with me. You have been a friend indeed to me, and I bless and thank my God who sent you to me. I also desire, on this my deathbed, to thank my minister for his faithfulness; and though I am a poor and most unworthy creature, and not fit to talk

of such things, yet I desire to acknowledge the comfort and edification I have derived from our very beautiful Church prayers, which, I am sure, have often spoken to my heart." Oh, how earnest we should be to seek the constant influences of God's Holy Spirit to bring every thought into subjection to the law of Christ, and to conform us to Him!

Martha seemed never tired, though her strength was now fast leaving her. Where there is a real love to God working in the heart, there will be a love to those around us; not only to a few dear relations and friends, but to the whole human race. The stranger and the wanderer, and those who forget God, will all be remembered by the true Christian; and surely it is the duty of all who really know Christ to endeavour to make others partakers of like blessedness. We may be certain, that the heart which loves the Saviour will not be careless about the welfare of sinners; yet it is not all who have that abiding gentleness, charity, and kindness, which are required in order to win souls to Christ.

When next I visited the cottage, Martha had entered into rest. All did, indeed, seem changed. Her chair was empty; strangers to me were flitting about the house; many things were out of order, and a bustle which made

the heart sad, pervaded the once quiet little kitchen. There was a preparation for more change; and with a sigh I walked up stairs. There all was repose; a smile was still upon the marble features, which made the face appear far younger than it really was; there was no trace of the sixty years' ignorance which poor Martha so often deplored; but there was a look of satisfaction and peace which made me check the sigh just ready to escape, and I exclaimed, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." The cottage has passed into other hands, and all memorial of Martha J—— has vanished, except a neat stone in P—— churchyard, and this brief sketch of her history by one who is not ashamed to call herself her friend.

"Evidently near her end, her mind was calm, and her peace perfect."

NUNC DIMITTIS.

"Lord, let thy servant now depart
Into thy promised rest,
Since my expecting eyes have been
With thy salvation blest.

"Which, till this time, thy favour'd saints
And prophets only knew;
Long since prepared, but now set forth
In all the people's view.

"A light to show the heathen world
The way to saving grace;
But oh! the light and glory both
Of Israel's chosen race."

MARY AND THOMAS C——, THE RIBBON-WEAVERS.

1850.

Poor Mary C——! How many of the great, the noble, and the learned, would be thankful now to exchange places with thee, though in the days of the years of thy pilgrimage, poverty, sickness, and suffering were thy chief heritage! Would, however, that all who read thy short history were partakers with thee of "like precious faith;" and could, with the same holy confidence, cast all their cares, sickness, and sorrow upon that Saviour who died for all, yet ever liveth to make intercession for the transgressors!

Mary C—— was a ribbon-weaver by trade, which occupation her husband also followed. They were happy in each other, remarkably neat and clean, both in their own persons and also in their cottage, which, though small, had at all times an air of comfort and convenience about it. They belonged to a class now fading away. They never troubled their heads about either politics or fashion; remembered enough of

their Church Catechism to behave themselves lowly and reverently "to all their betters: to be true and just in all their dealings: to keep their hands from picking and stealing: neither coveting nor desiring other men's goods, but labouring truly to get their own living in that station of life to which it had pleased God to call them." But there were times when no work was to be had; and however diligent they might be when they had work, the sad yet unavoidable uncertainty of their occupation threw them into difficulties and kept them poor. Still I never heard them blame either Church or State for their misfortunes. They loved the former, and respected the latter; and endeavoured to wait with cheerful patience till (as they expressed themselves) "things took a turn for the better." Mary was constantly in her place at church. A clean cotton gown, brown silk bonnet, white apron and tidy shawl was all the dress she desired, so far as this world is concerned. She was, however, earnest in her desire for the robe of her Saviour's righteousness, that she might be able to stand complete in Him when the fashion of this world shall pass away. Mary was a meek, quiet person, one who served God in sincerity and truth. I wish I could say as much of Mary's husband. But Thomas, though exceedingly kind, moral,

and industrious, neither knew the Lord, nor even wished to know Him. This was Mary's trial; but instead of "bringing a railing accusation against him," she meekly laid the case before her God, and was then content to wait his time. If we received what we desire immediately, we should often receive it as a matter of course; but blessed are they that wait for Him. They get one blessing in the thing promised, and another in waiting for it; their faith and patience are improved, and they themselves brought to great proficiency in the school of Christ. So the Holy Ghost testifies: "Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope." So Mary found it; for though she saw no anxiety in her husband to obtain salvation, she still prayed and hoped to the end. At length Mary was laid on a bed of affliction, and nothing could exceed her husband's care and kindness. She was missed by her pastor on the Sunday, and then the anxious inquiry arose, "Where was Mary C—— to-day? her seat at church was unoccupied." "I fear she is ill; nothing but that could keep her from the house of God." On investigation it proved true; severe sickness had overtaken her; and it was soon evident that her days on earth were numbered. She was pronounced by her medical attendant to be in a

decline, and he gave no hope of restoration to health. Her illness was lingering, and at times severe. The same holy meekness still rested upon her, and a short period spent by her bedside never failed to give instruction and satisfaction. Her room was, if possible, cleaner than ever, and she seemed to want no comfort. Thomas kept every thing neat and tidy, made the bed, cleaned the house, fetched the food, and, to use her words, "he is as tender in all he does for me as a daughter; he never seems tired; day and night is all one to him." "Well," said her visitor, "what you tell me is very pleasing; and I shall be glad indeed, if you can also say that your husband begins to be somewhat more in earnest about his own soul." "Oh, I wish I could! When I was in health he stayed at home to get my dinner and tea on the Sunday, and now he will not leave me because he thinks no one besides himself can be so tender. Still even this trial has ceased to trouble me, for I have rolled it upon my Lord; and I firmly believe when I am gone my dear Tom will be brought to a knowledge of his Saviour. While life is left I will pray for him; that is the appointed way for me, and the only means I can now use; and in God's time He will answer my petitions, for they have been many and sincere on that subject." One day, after a

rather lengthened conversation with her respecting her state before God, and her views of the Gospel plan of salvation, her visitor could not refrain from observing, "Why, Mary, you seem to me never to have any doubts and distressing fears, which often try some of God's people." "No," she answered, looking up, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." "But," it was observed, "great care must be taken that we do not look to, and depend upon any thing in ourselves, since all is but imperfect, and ever will be so." "True," said Mary, smiling sweetly, "we are to trust in Christ, who taketh away the sins of the world. The Lord hath said, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me[1];' and," continued Mary, "this peace must be obtained by diligent prayer and by continuing watchful, faithful, quiet, and humble. But," she observed, "I have thought much of God's mercy to me in this very thing, and I am come to this conclusion: you see I am a poor ignorant woman, and I never had a strong mind, like some; therefore God has spared me, because He saw that I had no ability to argue, and what I find in

[1] Isa. xxvii. 5.

my Bible I always believe, whether I understand it or not; and you know it often says, 'Fear not.'" I wish some with brighter parts and more learning would follow poor Mary's example; it would end much useless controversy. Simple, confiding, child-like faith is the foundation of true peace. Very soon after this she fell asleep in Jesus, and found the rest she so much desired.

To the last, no cloud was permitted to intervene between her soul and the bright Sun of righteousness who had arisen upon her with healing in his wings. Her minister and his wife felt her loss, and deeply deplored the breach made in their little flock; but they rejoiced to think that the humble, meek, believing Christian had left a testimony behind her of a faith which nothing was able to unsettle, and they hoped it would not soon be forgotten. They said to each other, "How many spend life in a restless striving after what they consider the good of this vanishing world! They rise up early, and late take rest, to accomplish their desires, and never long or strive after that peace which is a Saviour's best legacy, and a sure support in every time of need."

We must now turn to poor bereaved Thomas. Soon after the funeral he occupied Mary's place in the house of God. His look at first was quiet and grave; after a

time it became attentive; then the eye was raised with earnest desire to the face of his minister, then the knee bent in prayer; and there were times, again, when the full heart filled the eyes with tears, and a deep-drawn sigh told that all was not peace in that once cold, indifferent bosom. Something unusual was going on at the fountain of life. "My dear," said the minister to his wife, "there is something very touching in the deep attention of Thomas C——; I think the Spirit of the Lord is teaching him." "It will be a blessed answer to Mary's many prayers if it prove so," said the clergyman's wife.

Not long after this the clergyman was told a man wished to speak to him; and when the servant had showed Thomas into the study, Thomas said with deep feeling, "Sir, I wish to speak to you about my soul; I wish to receive the sacrament, and to join myself to the people of the Lord." "Indeed," said his spiritual guide, "it rejoices my heart greatly to hear you say this, my friend. Pray, what has made you thus anxious?"

"My dear wife's example, and her Bible, sir." "But, Thomas, you surprise me; during Mary's life you did not seem to notice either: how is this?" "You see, the case is this, sir. When my partner was gone, I used to think of how she looked and what

she said. I saw she did not fear death, and that set me to ask myself how I should feel if called into the presence of my Maker; I trembled at the thought. So then I took down her Bible, dusted it, and began to read. The evenings were long, and not having my dear Mary to wait upon made them seem longer; besides, I used to awake in the night at those times that I was accustomed to get her bits and sups, and in the stillness I used to think of many of her words to me; and somehow my heart began to be too large for my bosom, and at last I was obliged to get up and pray; and so I have been going on. Oh, sir, it's my soul I am now anxious about; let me find rest for that, and I can leave all beside with little trouble!"

From that day Thomas has been a consistent Christian, a communicant, and Sunday-school teacher; a subscriber to the Missionary Society, and a sincere and lowly follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Very often, in conversation with his minister and other Christian friends, will Thomas repeat many of his wife's observations; at the same time assuring his attentive hearers that at the period they were uttered they seemed to make no impression; and he will add, "It is the Spirit now that brings them to my remembrance."

Thomas is still a living witness to the

power of believing, waiting, fervent prayer. Surely we, too, have those dear to us who need our prayers. Are we like Mary C——, determined to believe, hope, wait, watch, and pray to the last? If so, her God is our God; his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, nor is his hand shortened that He cannot save. In his good time every desire will be more than satisfied, and every prayer more than answered.

What an encouragement is here afforded to piety in the married state! "For," in the language of St. Paul, "what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife[2]?"

"The humble, meek, believing Christian left a testimony behind her of a faith which nothing was able to unsettle."

"My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home, in life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say—
'Thy will be done.'

"If but my fainting heart be blest
With thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest—
'Thy will be done.'

"Renew my will from day to day;
Blend it with thine, and take away
All that now makes it hard to say—
'Thy will be done.'

---

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 16.

"Then, when on earth I breathe no more
The prayer, oft mix'd with tears before,
I'll sing upon a happier shore—
'Thy will be done.'"

OLD JOHN S——.

THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS CONVINCED OF SIN.

DIED —. AGED 80.

THE following account of John S—— was communicated to me by the wife of a clergyman, who knew and visited the old man. I shall endeavour to state the facts as nearly as possible in her own words. I think some at least of my readers will receive benefit from the perusal. I am also led to believe it contains great encouragement for those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, obey the "words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem," which are as follow: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

"In the year 1835 my husband became curate of the large parish of P——, and in the summer of that year the daughter of John S—— came to request the minister to visit her father, a man eighty years old,

and confined to his bed by severe illness. The summons was promptly obeyed, as no time was to be lost in such a case. After two or three visits, my husband requested his sister and myself to walk to old John's cottage, and talk to him; he told us the old man was most ignorant, and quite indifferent to his religious state. We accordingly acted upon the suggestion, and one fine evening extended our walk to the cottage. We found John very ill in bed, apparently suffering much pain. He was civil to us, but exceedingly full of bitter complainings respecting his bodily pains and infirmities, manifesting at the same time great unwillingness to speak of his soul or eternity. At length my sister said, 'John, we have walked down to speak to you upon a very important subject. Never mind your body just now, remember that must soon die; it is your soul we wish to talk of, for that, you know, must live for ever, either in endless happiness or misery; and then consider, my old friend, after death comes the judgment.' 'Yes,' said old John, 'I know all that; but I never did no harm to nobody, and I bear no malice or hatred in my heart, so I shall not hurt for that.' We endeavoured to press upon him his sinful state by reason of original sin and his own corrupt nature, and the need there was of seeking salvation from a loving Saviour, who promises to forgive the sins of all those who

with true penitence turn to Him. We inquired if he did not feel himself a sinner when he considered God's perfect holiness and strict justice. 'No,' he said, 'I cannot say I do.' Though very much pained at the old man's darkness and insensibility, we found great encouragement in his honesty; for, alas! many will not hesitate to confess themselves sinners, who never intend to go to Christ for salvation from their sins. I then said, 'John, the reason you do not think yourself a sinner is because you do not know how strict God's laws are. Why, do you forget that not only bad actions, but bad thoughts, unrepented of, will seal your damnation?' We left him, having first selected some chapters in the New Testament for his granddaughter to read to him. I constantly visited him, and very gradually light broke into his soul, which I mainly attribute to the reading of God's Word by the little girl, and the instructions of his minister.

"Some time after this, and during our absence from home, his daughter, who lived with him, died rather suddenly. Old John expressed much anxiety respecting her state, talked very earnestly to her, and prayed with and for her. On my return he said, 'My poor daughter is dead; I hope God for Christ's sake has pardoned her sins!' 'Do you think,' said his minister, 'that God

hears your prayers?' 'Well, sir,' he said, 'that's more than I can tell.' 'No, John,' was his pastor's reply, 'it is not more than you may know; for God in his Word assures us that He will hear the prayers of all who come to Him in his Son's name; therefore, you may be sure if you ask in faith you are heard.' 'Oh!' said the old man with animation, 'that is joyful news, that is good news indeed!' On another occasion, when his sinful life had been made the subject of our conversation, large tears coursed each other down his aged cheeks, and he remarked, 'If Christ were not my Saviour, what would become of me? If He will not have mercy, I have none else besides. I don't know whatever I must do, if He will not show me mercy.'

"Old John now made rapid advances in knowledge and grace: no mention of bodily pain, poverty, or grief, except for sin. He rejoiced to see us enter his cottage, and we never left without his blessing. When I first visited him, a sullen 'yes' or 'no' was all I obtained from him; his head, too, was turned from me; but now, when reading to him the Word of life, his eyes were fixed upon me, often full of tears, yet at the same moment beaming with gratitude. Indeed, 'old things had passed away, all things had become new;' he had received Christ and peace. One day when I called, poor John

shed a torrent of tears the moment he saw me; he did not give me time to inquire the cause. 'Oh!' he said, 'I am going into another parish; I shall never see either you or my minister again; that—that is my trouble!' It was now my turn to weep, and for some minutes we both wept in silence. But the Comforter brought to our minds the sweet promises of our heavenly Father; and 'Fear not, for I am with thee; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' brought us also refreshing comfort from the presence of our God. We then took an affectionate farewell of each other. 'Oh!' he said, 'if I had not Christ, whatever should I do now?' This was a favourite expression. In one month from his removal, John S—— died, full of years, and in perfect peace. In accordance with his last earthly wish, he was buried by my husband in the churchyard of P——. In my ignorance I had often sighed over the case of poor John S——; for to all human appearance his case was most hopeless; his coldness and dislike to myself, manifested in our early acquaintance, made me almost despair. I often said within myself, This poor old man has lived without God in the world, and now he will die without an interest in Christ. He lived, however, to feel himself the chief of sinners, and altogether dependent upon the love of God

in Christ Jesus for salvation. He had lived far from God and his ordinances, and profane language had been (as he afterwards confessed with shame and godly sorrow) the habit of his life. But when the Lord says, 'Let there be light,' there is light; and the Sun of righteousness, arising upon the darkness, illumines the understanding, and brings life and immortality to light by the Gospel. Let us never say it is too late, but continually encourage ourselves with the words of the Preacher, 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.' We may assure ourselves, that 'what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.'"

"If Christ were not my Saviour, what would become of me?"

"Rock of ages[1], cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on thy judgment throne—
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!"

[1] Isa. xxvi. 4, "Everlasting strength." Heb. "Rock of ages."

A FEW

PLAIN AND SHORT READINGS,

WITH A PRAYER,

FOR THE USE OF THE SICK AND AFFLICTED,

SELECTED FROM "THE COTTAGER'S MONTHLY VISITOR."

"Not my will, but thine be done."

SUBMISSION to God's will in all his righteous dealings with us is perhaps one of the attainments of faith which it is the most difficult to acquire. I would beg leave to remind all, that God's will must be done in them, as well as by them; and that very often it is by sufferings that his blessed will is perfected in us. We have daily many blessings, many mercies, and many providences for which to thank our heavenly Father. There is not one person living, even the most apparently destitute and afflicted, who does not daily receive from God a measure of his bountiful goodness; but still God's dealings towards us as children and as Christians would be incomplete, did He not also mingle affliction, sickness, and sorrow in the cup of his love;

and it is submission to these tokens of his loving-kindness to us which I would entreat all persons to endeavour to attain.

In order to this, remember, first, the sufferings that our blessed Saviour endured to save a lost and ruined world. "Behold, and see," says the prophet, foretelling his sufferings, "if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." It was for sinners that Christ came into the world; it was for sinners that Christ endured such a weight of afflictions, that "his soul became exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" it was for sinners that Christ died upon the cross, that He was crowned with a crown of thorns, and pierced with the spear of the soldier; and let sinners learn, at the foot of his cross, to count their sufferings as light, and but for a moment; and let them pray for grace that it may be their "meat and drink," as it was that of their Lord and Saviour, to do and to suffer God's righteous will.

Secondly, consider what, as sinners, we deserve at the hand of God. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We were by nature children of wrath, shapen in iniquity, and born in sin. Hell would, consequently, have been our portion for ever, had not God, in the riches of his grace, provided a way by which sinners might be

reconciled to Him, and be made heirs of eternal life; for "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Shall we, then, who have received the gift of a Saviour, who have the blessedness of knowing Jesus Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life," shall we repine, or indulge a murmuring thought, at any trial which it may please our heavenly Father to send upon us? Rather let us pray for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may learn to look with thankfulness upon every affliction or sickness with which He in his love may visit us; for God deals with us as with sons; and what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? And blessed, indeed, will that sorrow be, which may be the means of bringing us to a humble state of dependence upon Him who will never leave us; to a spirit of reliance upon Him who will never forsake us; and to a more perfect knowledge of Him whom truly to know is everlasting life.

Thirdly, reflect that all the events of this changing world are in the hands of One who has promised to make "all things work together for good to them that love Him," and "who doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men." He would teach us, by various trials, that this world is not our

rest; that here we have "no continuing city;" for we are as strangers and pilgrims; and our life is "even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." For this purpose, then, very often are afflictions sent to us, that "among the sundry and manifold changes of the world our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found;" that our affections may be raised from the things of time to the concerns of eternity; and that we may make Him our portion for ever, "in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." We may be called upon to part with those friends whom we love best; but if we are Christ's, we have Him for our unchanging Friend; for "he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We may suffer from poverty and distress; but if we are the children of God, He will "supply all our wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "We may have many trials laid upon us, and be ready to sink under them; but "we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" and we have this promise to plead in prayer, that "as our day is, so shall our strength be." We may be laid upon the bed of sickness; but if we are members of

Christ, we can look unto our compassionate Saviour, and think upon his love to us. This will soften every pain, and alleviate every suffering: the very sickness with which we may be afflicted is a fresh proof of his never-ceasing love to us: for "every branch of the true vine that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Lastly, the hour of death will come to each, to all of us: "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment;" but to those who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation, for Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. When we are called upon, then, to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil, for the good Shepherd Himself will be with us; and this is his own most gracious promise: "I give unto them (my sheep) eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." May God, of his great mercy, grant to each of us his Holy Spirit, and make us new creatures in Christ Jesus! May He give us grace to submit ourselves entirely, and in all things, to his righteous will concerning us! And may we thankfully receive every chastisement which, in his infinite wisdom, and his unerring love, He shall see fit to lay upon us!

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. iv. 17.

PERHAPS some persons who are smarting under God's afflicting hand, and are not yet fully brought through grace to feel that all things work together for good to them that love God, may wonder how afflictions such as theirs can be called light. May the Holy Spirit aid and direct us in considering these words! They were the sentiments of one who was called to endure more trials and sufferings than commonly fall to man's lot. In the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians we read, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And yet he could say his trials were light, and would last but for a moment. He had learnt to regard time, when compared with eternity, as a drop

of water in the ocean. This is surely a just estimate, when we consider how few years make up this life, and the countless millions of years which are in God's sight but as one day.

St. Paul could also say his afflictions were light, because they would work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let us not here misunderstand his words, or for a moment suppose that this tried and devoted servant of Christ Jesus thought he would receive eternal glory as a reward for his sufferings; far must such ideas have been from him who said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and whose ardent desire was "to cast down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" feeling that till all was laid at Jesus' feet, and every merit of his own renounced, he could not be in the way of eternal salvation. But he knew that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" and that it often pleases Him to bring his servants out of much tribulation into his heavenly kingdom. Only by grace through faith can we obtain that precious earnest of God's love to us, which enables us to

endure with patience those trials which are most painful to our weak, mortal nature.

My sorrowing friend, to you I will now address myself, for experience enables me to enter into your feelings. I know there are many troubles which may now be piercing your very soul; perhaps death has lately crossed your threshold, and taken from you one of your beloved family; perhaps the friend of your bosom, one to whom you confided all your joys and griefs, and with whom you took sweet counsel, has been removed from you; if so, you are now drinking deeply of the cup of sorrow. Or you may be laid on the bed of lingering sickness, your body wasted by disease, and sleepless, restless nights your portion. You feel your appointed time is nearly come. You see around you weeping friends; and if you are a parent, you behold your helpless offspring still clinging to you, feeling their dependence on you, and knowing you must soon leave them exposed to the snares and temptations of the world, without your protecting care to watch over them. This is indeed a trial to poor, weak creatures. Or poverty may threaten to deprive you of even the necessaries of life, and you may be compelled to see those whom you dearly love, and who are dependent on you, suffer severely

from privations, and feel yourself unable to remedy the evil. Or your own character may be unjustly defamed, without your having the power to clear it. These and various other calamities most persons have at some time or other been called to endure; and those who have no hope beyond this life, no precious promises of God's Word to trust in, no earnest of their Saviour's love to cheer them, frequently sink under the pressure of affliction. But not so the real Christian: he, though severely tried, can bow with submission to the hand that strikes, and say with David, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" and through grace can add his testimony to that of St. Paul, that "his light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Oh, may all who are chastened by the Lord receive this consolation! When the heart is full of sorrow, and the rest of our journey appears dark and desolate, how sweet it is to know that Jesus feels our infirmities, that He has for us conquered the sting of death, and that ere long, He will remove us to that happy country where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes!

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST A MOTIVE TO RESIGNATION IN SICKNESS AND DEATH.

"Looking unto Jesus."—Heb. xii. 2.

PART I.

If at any time we are disposed to fret and repine when affliction presses us sore, let us seek for comfort and a better mind in tracing the steps of our blessed Saviour. "Looking unto Jesus," let us confess that the glory reserved in heaven for us far outweighs our present sufferings. Let us compare the light weight of sorrow which now bows us down with that heavy burthen which Jesus carried. "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter[1]." We are perhaps enduring great bodily pain; the drops of perspiration mark the extremity of our anguish; but have we yet striven unto blood? "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood." Or it may not be bodily disease alone which is sent upon us; we may be suffering distress of mind—either a sense of our own guilt, or the loss of some dear friend. But what is the guilt of one, compared with the guilt of a

[1] Isa. liii. 3. 7.

whole world? "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." What is the loss of one dearest friend, compared with being forsaken of all in the moment of greatest trial? We may be mourning the loss of a parent, of a child, or of that friend who sticketh closer than a brother. The trial is hard, I grant; and as Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, so may we weep for our dead; but would not the trial be harder, if, instead of losing this dear one by death, the ties of love and affection had been rudely broken by treachery and unkindness? If, in a moment when some unjust attack had been made upon our property, or some false suspicions thrown upon our character, we should look around for our friends, for those to whom we had ever shown kindness, and on whom we had lavished many favours, and should find that none answered to our call; that one of these very friends had treacherously brought all this trouble upon us; that another had refused to acknowledge even our acquaintance; and that all had forsaken us in this hour of trial; would not this affliction be far, far more bitter than even to lay those we love best in the silent tomb? Yet this was what Christ endured. He had chosen to Himself a holy band, who followed their Master, and showed Him all duty and affection, while He bestowed the greatest benefits on them; but

in the dread hour of trial Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and all forsook Him, and fled. "Looking unto Jesus," let us acknowledge how easy are our trials compared with his.

PART II.

From the very depth of sorrow and humiliation endured by Christ, let the afflicted draw comfort and encouragement. On whom was all this suffering laid? Was it not on the beloved Son of God? And what was the end of these sufferings? Christ was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God! Well then may St. Paul exhort us not to faint when we are rebuked of God, but to "look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Christ Himself tells us, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." And He also thus assures us, in John xiv. 2, 3, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which

is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed[2]." Whatever the present chastisement may be, it is from the Lord; He dealeth with us as with sons; and if we are duly exercised thereby, we shall reap the peaceable fruits of righteousness. But in this we must look to Jesus. He bore the cross patiently to the end. It was not till the Father's work was fully accomplished in Him that He could cry, "It is finished!" and say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit[3]." He trod the appointed path of suffering to the end, feeling acutely the pain, yet submitting to his Father's will, in order to accomplish his Father's purpose. God has a good purpose in our affliction. Let us not endeavour to thwart it: be it ours, as far as we can, to promote it; and to aid us in it, let us learn to look to Jesus, and persevere unto the end.

In conclusion. This is now our time of trial. The crown of thorns is now placed on our brow, and we must feel the sharpness of the thorns; but we must remember that it is placed there as a mark of chastening love, not willingly, nor in anger; but to fulfil some wise purpose, to accomplish some divine mission; and our care must be to let patience have her perfect work, and then we

[2] Heb. xii. 12, 13. [3] Luke xxiii. 46.

may look forward to a blessed rest. He who raised Jesus from the dead can raise us from the lowest depths of woe. His Father is our Father. He calleth us mercifully to amendment, and of his endless pity promiseth us forgiveness of that which is past, if with a perfect and true heart we return unto Him. Let us therefore return unto Him who is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners, assuring ourselves that He is ready to receive us, and most willing to pardon us, if we come unto Him with faithful repentance; if we submit ourselves unto Him, and from henceforth walk in his ways; if we will take his easy yoke and light burthen upon us, to follow Him in lowliness, patience, and charity, and be ordered by the governance of his Holy Spirit, seeking always his glory, and serving Him duly in our vocation with thanksgiving. This if we do, Christ will set us on his right hand, and give us the gracious benediction of his Father, commanding us to take possession of the kingdom prepared for us; unto which may He vouchsafe to bring us all through his infinite mercy! and then we shall acknowledge that by "looking to Jesus" we have been led from a vale of suffering to the kingdom of glory. Amen.

"Now is the accepted time."

THE present is the time for us to seek the Lord; there is no future time promised, to which we are allowed to put off the work: "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation[1]." But suppose we could be sure that we should not yet be called to our account; yet, even then, to put off the work of repentance would be a ruinous determination; for though we believe that God will hear the prayer of the true penitent who in sincere faith turns unto Him; abhorring his sins, and coming with a broken and a contrite heart, through Christ, for pardon; earnestly desirous of henceforth serving God in newness of heart and life; yet who can depend upon ever being brought to such a state of mind, that really penitent state to which alone the promises of pardon are given? Such a state of heart is itself the gift of God, the work of the Spirit. Our heavenly Father has indeed promised that He will give his Holy Spirit to them that seek Him; but He has not promised that He will give it to those who continue, and who deliberately resolve to continue, in a course of sin, which they know to be entirely contrary to his will. When such per-

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 2.

sons, in the time of sickness, or at the approach of death, are compelled, as it were, to see the dreadful danger they are in; when they cannot help thinking of the world to come, and looking on the awful prospect of eternity; then indeed they tremble at the thoughts of encountering the approaching trial, and are ready to call upon the Lord! The expectation of the wrath of God compels them to fear Him, though all his past mercies could never lead them to serve Him.

Now there is, indeed, grief for sin; now there is, indeed, what the alarmed sinner believes to be repentance. But this is not the repentance to which the promises of pardon are given in the Gospel; for in this vain repentance there is no anxious wish to serve God, nothing but a desire to escape the severity of his anger. And can the sinner expect that he should then be heard, when he has hitherto rejected every offer of mercy, and resisted every call to come to God, and to serve Him?

I do not mean to discourage any one from seeking the Lord, even at the last hour; and the great Searcher of hearts alone can know when repentance is sincere, and when it is such as would lead to newness of life, if the sinner should be spared. To such penitence the offer of mercy is constantly held out. But what reasonable expectation can there

be, that the man who in the time of health shuts his ears against every call to repentance, will in his last hour of danger be influenced by any other motive than the fear of approaching wrath? His heart may, indeed, even then be touched by the grace of God, and by the Spirit of love and of holiness; but our experience of those who have been raised from the bed of sickness, after great professions, gives us but little encouragement to hope much from apparent deathbed repentance. The risk is fearful. Turn, then, unto God, and seek Him now; seek Him so that ye may experience his love, before you are driven to fly in terror from his wrath. Declare war against sin now. Be the soldier and servant of Christ,—to Him you have pledged yourself,—fight manfully under the banner of the Cross, and seek that help which is offered to you now. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." Do you refuse this day? It may be your last opportunity. This day let your resolve be made: let it be made in dependence on divine help, and you may then trust that his grace and mercy will enable you to keep it.

ON SICK PERSONS SENDING FOR THEIR CLERGYMAN.

It may be serviceable to many of my readers if I tender a few words of advice upon two subjects relating to sickness.

In the first place, numbers need to be reminded that it is their duty, when ill, to send for their minister, as stated in the Directions prefixed to the "Order for the Visitation of the Sick." In the smallest parishes a clergyman cannot always hear of his neighbour's illness, although some are so unreasonable as to take for granted that he has been informed; and, at any rate, it must be pleasanter to his feelings to find that his services are valued, and his attendance requested, than to go uninvited into their presence. During many a pastoral visit, it is with regret he discovers that a person has just recovered from a serious disorder, and returned to his work, without the benefit of spiritual advice; that the opportunity of instilling the truths of the Gospel into a mind softened by affliction, and during an interval of rest from worldly occupations, has been lost. Still more distressing must it be to the faithful minister to hear the solemn bell announce the departure of a soul, of whose approach to the gates of death he had received no intimation. It is surely a duty

to acquaint the minister with the sickness of his parishioners, when they are in a state to derive benefit from his visits, and not to put it off till the mind is enfeebled and distracted with pain, and the soul struggling for release.

The other subject which I would beg to notice is the disuse into which the custom of desiring the prayers of the congregation has lamentably fallen. He neglects a very powerful means of grace, who does not avail himself of the opportunity offered to him of securing in his favour the united intercession of every truly devout Christian in the Church, where the interest felt in his case would give a depth of feeling to the prayer for "those who are afflicted or distressed," which, under ordinary circumstances, could scarcely be experienced. We are commanded by an Apostle, "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed." If "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," how much more the united prayers of many!

For obvious reasons, it is desirable that the request should proceed from the afflicted person, rather than be suggested by the clergyman.

PRAYER OF A SICK PERSON.

"O merciful God and heavenly Father, who hast brought me to this bed of weakness and sickness, give me patience to submit to this thy chastisement with thankfulness, and give me grace to derive from it everlasting benefit to my soul. Now that Thou hast subdued my spirit, and rendered it less regardful of all worldly concerns, oh, let thy Holy Spirit enter into, and renew my heart, cleanse it from all worldly and sinful desires, and incline it stedfastly to be fixed upon heaven and upon Thee!

"Help me, O God, by the same Spirit, to tell out to Thee my sins and negligences with the sorrow of repentance, and, O merciful God, forgive me; forgive me for the sake of Jesus Christ. 'Remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but think Thou upon me, O Lord, according to thy goodness.' Whether Thou art pleased to restore me to my former health, or whether Thou art pleased to take me out of this state of trial, teach me submission to thy holy will; and may I say, from my heart, 'Thy will be done.' Although, for our profit, Thou art pleased to 'wither us like grass,' and cut us down like the flower, yet there is, beyond this life, a glory that will never fade away, reserved in heaven

for all who love Thee. On Thee, therefore, may I be enabled to fix entirely my heart and my hope. Although I am weak in body, Thou canst make me strong in faith,—faith in thy ever-blessed Son Jesus Christ, and in the all-sufficiency of his death to atone for the offences of every miserable sinner. Make haste, O Lord, to save me and to help me; and lead me and exalt me, out of this troublesome world, to the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before.

"Grant these petitions to me, thy unworthy servant, I most earnestly implore Thee, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen."

CONCLUDING HYMN.

"For all thy saints, O Lord,
Who strove in Thee to live,
Who follow'd Thee, obey'd, adored,
Our grateful hymn receive.

"For all thy saints, O Lord,
Accept our grateful cry,
Who counted Thee their great reward,
And strove in Thee to die.

"They all in life and death,
With Thee their Lord in view,
Learn'd from thy Holy Spirit's breath
To suffer and to do.

" For this thy name we bless,
And humbly pray that we
May follow them in holiness,
And live and die in Thee."

THE END

GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.